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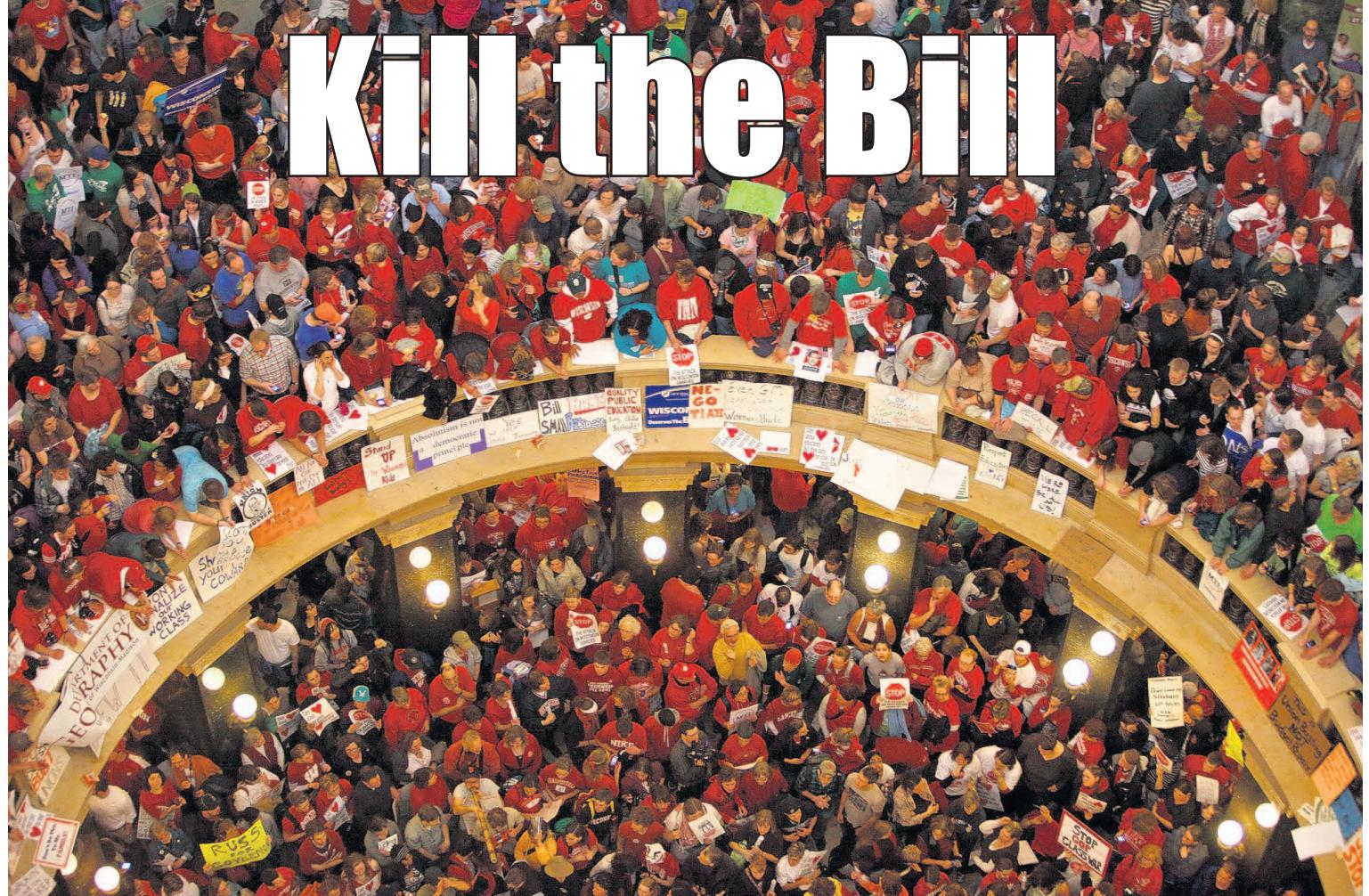
Friday, February 18, 2011

Major Midwest spring flooding certain, records possible



ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Major flooding is certain along the Red River where North Dakota and Minnesota residents are amassing sandbags to hold back what may be record crests, a National Weather Service meteorologist said on Thursday.

The weather service saw no improvement in conditions along the Red River from a report issued three weeks ago, and increased slightly the expected peak flooding levels for Fargo, North Dakota and other communities in the river valley. "For certain we are going to have major flooding on the Red River," said Dan Luna, meteorologist-in-charge at the National Weather Service in Minneapolis-St. Paul. "The question this year on the Red River is will we exceed the levels we saw last year and maybe more importantly what is the potential to break the records up there," Luna said. The Red River reached a record crest of nearly 41 feet in Fargo in 2009 and at 54.35 feet in 1997 further downstream at Grand Forks. There is a better than 50 percent chance that the river crests at over 51 feet in the Grand Forks area, the National Weather Service said. □



SCOTT BAUER
Associated Press

MADISON, Wisconsin (AP) — A group of Democratic lawmakers blocked passage of a sweeping anti-union bill Thursday, refusing to show up for a vote and then abruptly leaving the state in an effort to force Republicans to the negotiating table.

As ever-growing throngs of protesters filled the Capitol for a third day, the 14 Democrats disappeared around noon, just as the Senate was about to begin debating the measure, which would end a half-century of collective bargaining rights for most public employees. Hours later, one member of the group told The Associated Press that they had left Wisconsin.

"The plan is to try and slow this down because it's an

extreme piece of legislation that's tearing this state apart," Sen. Jon Erpenbach said in a telephone interview. He refused to say where he was. Democrats hoped Republican Gov. Scott Walker and Republican lawmakers would consider revisions to the bill. Walker, who took office just last month, urged the group to return and called the boycott a "stunt."

"It's more about theatrics than anything else," he said. The governor predicted the group would come back in a day or two, after realizing "they're elected to do a job."

Walker said Democrats could still offer amendments to change the bill, but he vowed not to concede on his plan to end most collective bargaining rights.

With 19 seats, Republicans hold a majority in the

33-member Senate, but they are one vote short of the number needed to conduct business. So the Republicans need at least one Democrat to be present before any voting can take place. Once the measure is brought to the floor, it needs 17 votes to pass.

Other lawmakers who fled sent messages over Twitter and issued written statements but did not disclose their location.

Erpenbach said the group had been in Rockford, Illinois, but they dispersed by late afternoon and were all still outside Wisconsin.

In response to a question of where she was, Sen. Lena Taylor sent a tweet saying she was "doing the people's business. Power to the PEOPLE." As Republicans tried to

begin Senate business Thursday, observers in the gallery screamed "Freedom! Democracy! Unions!" Opponents cheered when a legislative leader announced there were not enough senators present to proceed. The sergeant-at-arms immediately began looking for the missing lawmakers. If he cannot find them, he's authorized to seek help, including potentially contacting police. Senate rules and the state constitution say absent members can be compelled to appear, but it does not say how.

"Today they checked out, and I'm not sure where they're at," Republican Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald said. "This is the ultimate shutdown, what we're seeing today." □

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U.S. charges 111 in largest Medicare fraud crackdown

WASHINGTON – The U.S. government on Thursday charged 111 doctors, nurses and other defendants with Medicare crime schemes that exceeded \$225 million in false billings, the largest health care fraud crackdown so far.

Attorney General Eric Holder and Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced the charges in the latest of a series of cases brought by the Obama administration as health care fraud has emerged as an important political issue.

About 45 million elderly and disabled Americans are enrolled in taxpayer-funded Medicare plans, which have come under fire from critics who say the government pays too much to the companies running them and that they are subject to fraud.

Medicare reform represented a key part of the sweeping



year-old health care law championed by Democratic President Barack Obama, but opposed by many Republicans in Congress.

The latest charges covered defendants in nine cities. In addition to arrests, law enforcement agents also executed 16 search warrants. The defendants were charged various crimes, including conspiracy to defraud the

Medicare program, false claims, kickbacks and money laundering, administration officials said.

They said the alleged schemes involved various medical treatments, tests and services, such as home health care, physical and occupational therapy and medical equipment. “Although today marks a critical step forward in combating and deterring

illegal activity, our work is far from over,” Holder said. Fraud has accounted for as much as an estimated \$60 billion a year in the Medicare program.

A top FBI official, Shawn Henry, said 2,600 health care fraud cases were under investigation and that

organized crime groups have been increasingly linked to the alleged schemes. Sebelius said \$4 billion was recovered last year, and the government’s Medicare Fraud Strike Force was recently expanded to nine cities, with the addition of Dallas and Chicago. □

Accused Ponzi scheme

Stanford suing for \$7.2 billion

HOUSTON – Jailed financier Allen Stanford, accused of running a massive Ponzi scheme, filed a \$7.2 billion lawsuit accusing federal prosecutors and regulators of depriving him of his constitutional rights.

The government agents “undertook illegal tactics” to prosecute Stanford and “engaged in unfair, abusive law enforcement methods and tactics” that left him broke and unable to properly defend himself, according to the lawsuit filed in federal court in Houston late on Wednesday.

The lawsuit seeking return of

his assets comes two years after the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filed civil charges against the former jet-setting Texas financier.

Stanford is accused of running a \$7 billion Ponzi scheme centered on fraudulent certificates of deposit issued by Stanford International Bank in Antigua. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges in a 21-count indictment.

“Mr. Stanford was literally left with only the suit he was wearing at the time of the SEC Agents and U.S. Marshals seizure of property”

the lawsuit said.

A spokeswoman for the U.S. Attorney in Houston declined to comment on the lawsuit, as did a spokesman for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

U.S. District Judge David Hittner, who ruled that Stanford is incompetent to stand trial in his current mental state, has also declared the former billionaire indigent.

Stanford, 60, is in the process of being transferred to a prison hospital for treatment of addiction to a powerful anti-anxiety medication he was prescribed while jailed. □



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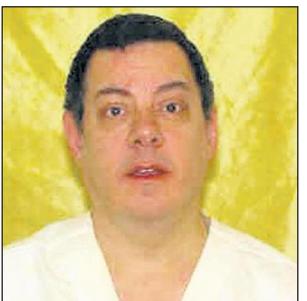
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In Ohio

Nazi sympathizer executed

COLUMBUS, Ohio – A Nazi sympathizer who was convicted of killing three people in 1982 on an Ohio college campus was executed on Thursday by lethal injection, officials said.

Frank Spisak, 59, died at 10:34 a.m. local time at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility in Lucasville, according to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. This was the seventh execution in the United States so far this year. Spisak wore a Hitler-style mustache during his 1983 trial. In January, the Ohio Parole Board unanimously recommended against clemency for Spisak, and Ohio Governor John R. Kasich denied a request for executive clemency earlier this month. His victims included the Rev. Horace Rickerson, 57, Timothy Sheehan, 50, and a teenager, 17-year-old Brian Warford. Spisak said he killed Rickerson because he was a black man who rebuffed his sexual advances, according to prosecutors. Spisak tried to kill another man, John Hardaway, 54, while on a “hunting party” for black people, prosecutors said. While on another “hunting party,” Spisak killed Warford, who was black, prosecutors



said. He killed Timothy Sheehan, who was white, because Spisak believed he was a potential witness in the Rickerson murder, prosecutors said. Spisak was the longest serving prisoner on Ohio’s death row, at 27 years. In asking for clemency, Spisak’s attorneys had argued

that he was mentally ill. His last meal was spaghetti with light tomato sauce, salad with Italian dressing and chocolate cake for dessert, according to Carlo LoParo of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. His final statement was a recitation in the German language of seven verses from the Biblical Book of Revelation, which he had previously written out.

Spisak was injected with the drug sodium thiopental, according to LoParo. Spisak was the last Ohio prisoner to be executed using this drug, which is in short supply.

Hospira Inc. of Illinois said last month it would stop making the drug, bowing to European Union pressure.

Ohio said it will use pentobarbital, which is often used to euthanize pets, for the scheduled execution of Johnnie Baston in March. □

In New York

Palin hard as bullets on new gun laws

WOODBURY, N.Y. – Sarah Palin stuck to her guns on “death panels” Thursday, and on guns for that matter, in a rare public appearance in which reporters were allowed. She continued tweaking the first lady’s efforts to fight childhood obesity, but chided some of her own supporters for sustaining the “annoying” claims that President Barack Obama is foreign-born and Muslim. As for the big question whether she’s running for president in 2012 the former vice presidential Republican nominee said she’s thinking about it. “No one is more qualified, really to multitasking and the things you need to do as president than a woman, a mom,” said the former Alaska governor, who has five children. Palin sat for a wide-ranging interview with the president of the Long Island Association, a business group outside New

York, at the group’s annual meeting. Kevin Law pressed her on gun rights, potential presidential aspirations and how she usually communicates through Facebook and Fox News, where she is a contributor, rather than talking to reporters.

Reporters were allowed at the New York event, unlike many Palin speaking engagements where they have been banned, but they did not get a chance to ask questions. Law asked Palin if she would support efforts to restrict semiautomatic weapons or multi-bullet clips, like the clips used the shooting last month in Tucson, Ariz., that left six people dead and U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords critically wounded. “There are already on the books many gun control measures and I do support those that are on the books. I do not support taking



away more freedom from the good guy,” Palin said. “The people who have no intention of using that weapon to harm another person so, no additional gun control measures could be supported.” Palin was criticized after the shootings for having published campaign literature that marked some Democratic districts, including Giffords’s, with crosshairs,

In Minnesota

Chipotle fired 450 workers after immigration auditing

LOS ANGELES – Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc fired about 450 workers in Minnesota after an audit by U.S. immigration officials flagged questionable worker eligibility documents, the company said in a regulatory filing on Thursday.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) audited the company’s Minnesota restaurants, which led to the dismissals mentioned above.

The agency also is auditing employee documents from the fast-growing burrito chain’s restaurants in Virginia and Washington, D.C.

“We have received additional requests for work authorization documents covering a small number of individual restaurants,” the company said in the regulatory filing. Chipotle spokesman Chris Arnold told Reuters in an email that the additional ICE requests were for restaurants in the areas already subject to document reviews.

In addition to Minnesota restaurants, Arnold said ICE is auditing “60 or so” restaurants in the Washington, D.C. and Virginia area. □



Republican contest in which social media would play a pivotal role.

“That’s what going rogue is all about,” Palin said, referring to the title of her best-selling memoir.

She also praised the tea party movement, saying it had forced Republicans and Democrats to “rethink the way they do business.”

She said she supported tea party-supported lawmakers’ push for entitlement reform and their threats to vote against increasing the debt ceiling.

Palin did, however, distance herself from the so-called “birthers” who believe Obama was not born in the United States, and others who contend he is not Christian, as he insists, but Muslim. She said she does not question the president’s faith or citizenship and added, “It’s distracting. It gets annoying. Let’s stick with what really matters.” □

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Great Backyard Bird Count

U.S., Canada prepare for annual bird count

WASHINGTON – Tens of thousands of people in the United States and Canada will this week rediscover the original meaning of “twitter” and “tweet” as they take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count.

The organizers of the bird count the Audubon Naturalist Society, Bird Studies Canada and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology are hoping to break the participation record set last year, when more than 97,000 checklists were sent in from across North America, reporting 602 species and 11.2 million individual bird sightings. Participants in 2010 saw more than 1.8 million American robins as well as the first red-billed tropicbird in the history of the 14-year count. The rare bird



This is the fastest animal on the planet is the Peregrine Falcon who frequently returns to Aruba for a visit. Aruba's First National bird count will be held on March 18, the day on which Aruba celebrates its National Flag and Anthem.

Photo by Greg Peterson

was spotted near San Diego, in southern California. The avian census has also charted the dramatic spread of the Eurasian collared-dove, which was reported in eight states in 1999 and in

39 last year. But some of the statistics the bird counters send in are alarming, such as the sharp drop in the number of glaucous-winged gulls on the US Pacific Coast.

In California, 83 percent

fewer of the gulls were spotted during last year's count, even though the number of checklists handed in from the western state was up by a quarter. Previous counts have also shown a drop in the number of American crows since 2003, the first year of widespread outbreaks of West Nile virus in the United States.

To take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, participants observe and count birds in the spot of their choosing for at least 15 minutes on any or every day from Friday to Monday. They then fill in a form on

which they identify the birds and indicate how many they saw.

Because birds of a feather tend to look a lot like each other, and because they have a tendency to move around a lot, avian census takers are asked to only list the maximum number of a species that they see together.

So if they see four northern cardinals, then three fly away but five more join the lone remaining cardinal, they would note down six on their checklist, which would be sent in to the organizers of the count. □

In Wisconsin

Lawmakers flee state to block anti-union bill

By SCOTT BAUER
Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. – Faced with a near-certain Republican victory that would end a half-century of collective bargaining for public workers, Wisconsin Democrats retaliated with the only weapon they had left: They fled. Fourteen Democratic lawmakers disappeared from the Capitol on Thursday, just as the Senate was about to begin debating the measure aimed at easing the state's budget crunch. By refusing to show up for a vote, the group brought the debate to a swift halt and hoped to pressure Republicans to the negotiating table.

“The plan is to try and slow

this down because it's an extreme piece of legislation that's tearing this state apart,” Sen. Jon Erpenbach said. The move drew cheers from tens of thousands of protesters — teachers, prison guards and other public employees targeted by the proposal — who filled the Statehouse during the past three days. Republican Gov. Scott Walker, who took office just last month, has made the bill a top priority. He urged the group to return and called the boycott a “stunt.” “It's more about theatrics than anything else,” Walker said, predicting that the group would come back in a day or two, after realizing “they're

elected to do a job.” Walker said Democrats could still offer amendments to change the bill, but he vowed not to concede on his plan to end most collective bargaining rights. Sen. Tim Cullen of Janesville said he was back in Wisconsin Thursday night, but he did not expect Democrats to return to take up the bill until Saturday. With 19 seats, Republicans hold a majority in the 33-member Senate, but they are one vote short of the number needed to conduct business. So the GOP needs at least one Democrat to be present before any voting can take place. □

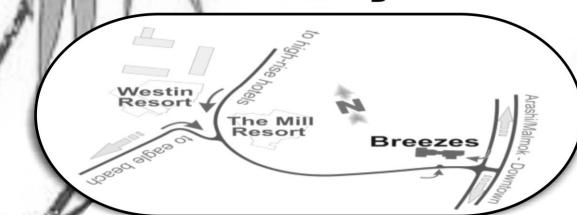
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Government shutdown?

GOP, Democrats swap charges

WASHINGTON – In a deepening struggle over spending, Republicans and Democrats swapped charges Thursday over a possible government shutdown when funding expires March 4 for most federal agencies.

"Read my lips: We're going to cut spending," declared House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, who pledged that the GOP-controlled House would refuse to approve even a short-term measure at current funding levels to keep the government operating. He prefaced his remarks by accusing Democrats of risking a shutdown "rather than to cut spending and to follow the will of the American people." But moments later, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., retorted that Boehner was resorting "to threats of a shutdown without any negotiation."

The sparring occurred as the House labored to complete work on veto-threatened legislation to cut more than \$61 billion from the budget year that's more than a third over. That bill also would provide funding to keep the government operating until



Sept. 30.

With that one bill at the center of a political dispute the House has repeatedly worked well past midnight on the legislation this week. Boehner chose the moment to open a second front. To underscore the budget-cutting commitment by the 87 conservative new members of his rank and file, he announced that Republicans would move quickly this spring on companion legislation to cut "wasteful mandatory spending" by the federal government. He provided no details, but party officials said they expected the effort to begin shortly after the House returns from next week's recess.

The current legislation is sweeping in scope, containing cuts to literally hundreds of domestic programs, from education

to environmental protection, nutrition and parks.

In addition, it has become a target for first-term conservative Republicans eager to demonstrate their budget-cutting bona fides and for other lawmakers hoping to change the course of government in ways large or small.

Rep. Tim Walberg, R-Mich., was successful in cutting an additional \$20 million from the National Endowment for the Arts, already targeted for a \$23 million reduction from current levels. The vote was 217-207.

But by a margin of 322-104, Rep. Charlie Bass, R-N.H., lost his bid to restore \$50 million of a proposed cut in funding for low-income heating assistance.

Rep. Tom Price, R-Ga., sought to eliminate funding for the National Labor Relations Board, but was rebuffed, 250-176. That left in place a cut of \$50 million, or 18 percent, for the agency that referees disputes between workers and employers. House leaders had originally hoped to complete work on the bill by day's end, but even after long hours in session this week, that appeared increasingly unlikely. □

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In New York

Airport bomb plotter handed life sentence



NEW YORK – A U.S. judge on Thursday sentenced an Islamist militant to life in prison after a jury found him guilty of participating in a plot to bomb New

York's John F. Kennedy International Airport. Russel Defreitas, 67, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Guyana, was found guilty in August by a federal jury of conspiring to blow up buildings, fuel tanks and pipelines at the airport in the New York City borough of Queens. He was sentenced by Brooklyn U.S. District Court Judge Dora Irizarry.

Defreitas, who had worked at the airport, provided knowledge of its facilities and layout, U.S. prosecutors said. He was arrested in June 2007 along with three other men. During the trial, jurors heard testimony and watched video clips of the airport filmed by Defreitas, and listened to audio recordings of the men made by a government informant. Officials have said the plot was nowhere near being

operational when the men were arrested.

"Russell Defreitas plotted to commit a terrorist attack that he hoped would rival 9/11," Brooklyn U.S. Attorney Loretta Lynch said in a statement. "Now, our courts have dispensed justice by handing out the life sentence that Defreitas richly deserves."

The men sought to offer their plans to Jamaat Al Muslimeen, an Islamist extremist group in Trinidad and Tobago that was behind a 1990 coup attempt on the island, prosecutors said. Defense attorneys for the men portrayed them as all bluster and no substance, but prosecutors said they did more than just talk and "took concrete steps to make this plan a reality."

Of the other three other men arrested in the plot, one was handed a life sentence in December, one has been too ill to stand trial and the third pleaded guilty to lesser crimes and was sentenced to 15 years in prison in January. □

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LOCAL

Aruba TODAY

Shakin it up at Salt & Pepper



PALM BEACH – The former manager of Tango Restaurant was just recently named the manager of Salt & Pepper. This is a great new challenge for Laura van der Tol, but she is in great company with a new staff. Merlijn van Lelyveld was the manager of Salt & Pepper and everyone wishes her well on her new endeavors.

We already know Salt & Pepper for their good opening hours, but as of recently, you can come in for a bite even after 12 midnight! Salt & Pepper is located in Arawak Garden high rise area, in front of Occidental Hotel. Open every day from 8 am till 1 am for breakfast, lunch & dinner. Free sangria with your meal between 5-7 pm. □



St. Maarten High Councils visit Aruba

ORANJESTAD -

Representatives of St. Maarten's High Councils of State and Advisory Council met with Aruba's Court of Audit, Advisory Council, the Social Economic Council SER and President of the Aruba Parliament during the first day of their fact-finding mission on Tuesday. The delegation later met with Aruba's Prime Minister Mike Eman in his offices. The trip was organised by the St. Maarten Department of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

Aruba Court of Audit President Gabriel Werleman and Vice President Frederick Nuboer met the delegation.

Aruba Court of Audit has existed since that island attained country within the kingdom status in 1986. The Aruban expressed enthusiasm about forging cooperative ties with St. Maarten's Councils and to exchange ideas with St. Maarten.

The St. Maarten delegation met again on Wednesday with the Court of Audit representatives and discussed in depth technical issues of interest.

Subsequent to the Tuesday's meeting with the Court of Audit, the delegation met with members of the Aruba Advisory Council. Receiving the St. Maarten delegation were Chairman A.J. Swaen, members J.R. Tchong and John S. Kuiperdal and other members. Aruba Advisory Council Vice Secretary A. Braamkamp and Secretary Hellen van der Wal were also present. Topics discussed included the similarity and differences of the councils and possible areas for future collaboration.



On Wednesday, the dialogue continued and included other technical topics of mutual interest.

The introductory meetings continued Tuesday afternoon with the members of the Aruban Social Economic Council receiving the delegation. Rob de Zwart along with the secretariat and members of the Council provided a short outline of the history of the Aruba council and approach to the advisory responsibilities.

Topics that were reviewed included the Aruban experience in advising on tax related issues. The need and value of professionals including economists within the secretariat of the Council was also discussed. Availability of expertise has proven essential to the quality of the advisory capacity of all the Council on Aruba, according to a press statement from the St. Maarten delegation. To round out the day's schedule, the delegation paid a courtesy visit to the President of the Aruba Parliament Pauldrick Croes. The delegation exchanged information about the efforts to build the



Higher Councils of State in St. Maarten and received a briefing from Croes about innovations within the Aruba Parliament and how these relate to the relationship with the Aruban High Councils of State. Members of the St. Maarten delegation are Chairman of the General Audit Chamber Roland Tuitt, Advisory Council Vice President Mavis Brooks-Salomon, Advisory Council member Dennis Richardson, and SER representative Clarence Richardson, Audit Chamber Secretary General

Joane Dovale-Meit, Arjen Alberts of the Department of General Affairs and Kingdom Relations, and Project Leader for "Establishment Higher Councils of State" Pyt Lucas.

The working visit to Aruba and Curaçao is financed in part by Dutch development funds, managed by USONA as part of the project "Establishment of the Higher Councils of State." The delegation returns home on Saturday, February 19.

Credit to The Daily Herald of St. Maarten. □

Block the Sun, Keep the Fun

Links Ladies enjoy lunch sponsored by Manrique Capriles



DIVI LINKS – A special luncheon at Windows on Aruba was offered to the Links Ladies by the local purveyor of Neutrogena. Christine Hintz Jr, Brand Manager at Manrique Capriles orchestrated an informative presentation on the merits of the excellent skin products especially the ones designed to shield the golfers' faces from the damaging effects of the sun. Neutrogena presented its latest Anti-Oxidant Age Reversal line of products, and its Deep Clean, Health Defense products as well as the famous Age Shield Face Sun Block already very popular on the golf course. The culinary brigade presented an excellent creamy Lobster Bisque with Scallops, Shrimp and French Brandy chase of a fancy Caesar & Chicken Salad garnished by Parmesan Cheese, garlic croutons and bacon bits. Pictures here the elegant luncheon, at Windows on Aruba teaching the Link Ladies to Block the Sun and Keep the Fun. □



At Bucuti & Tara Beach Resorts

Romantic Experience For English Couple on Aruba

EAGLE BEACH – England natives Zarla and James Fowler's dream wedding at Bucuti & Tara Beach Resorts, Aruba's premier resort for romance, went down without a hitch on January 21, 2011. The couple's romance began at first-sight at a local hometown bar in Basingstoke. Within a year of dating, James, a Royal Airforce Chinook Crewman, proposed minutes before boarding an aircraft to leave for a tour of duty in Afghanistan. "Our wedding nearly didn't happen!" said new bride Zarla Fowler. □

"James was stuck in Afghanistan due to flight delays in the UK as a result of snow storms. All airports were closed."

Luckily, despite flight delays and airport closures, James Fowler was able to make it to Aruba to enjoy his big day. "To sum up our entire wedding and the Bucuti resort in one word, outstanding!" said James Fowler. "The food, the drinks, the amazing beach location, the sunset, we couldn't ask for more!" □



Aruba's first fational fird count to be held



he Shoco, Aruba's Burrowing Owl, is threatened in many ways. The primary threat: man. And then there is the invasive Boa constrictor. But it also has natural enemies. The Shoco's take turn inspecting the skies. They know that a hungry Peregrine Falcon can pop-up out of nowhere.

Photo by Greg Peterson

ORANJESTAD - For the first time foundation Aruba Birdlife Conservation in cooperation with the Taskforce Boa constrictor is organizing a national bird count in which everybody who lives on Aruba can

participate. At first, the bird count was intended to be held on Christmas day, but a better idea was brought forward. It was suggested to hold the national bird count on March 18, the day on which Aruba celebrates its National Flag and

Anthem.

The bird count could be added to the agenda of cultural events planned for Aruba's National day and as such henceforth become an annual event. The Minister responsible for Cultural Affairs, Minister Michele Hooyboer-Winklaar, who is responsible for the event planning of March 18th, has informed Aruba Birdlife Conservation that she would gladly support such an important activity being added to the program of Aruba's National Day.

The event will take place first thing in the morning and will last for 15 minutes. Citizens of Aruba are requested to participate by choosing a certain location, preferably in their gardens or in the vicinity thereof and count the birds they spot within the 15-minute window of opportunity. A special form



Minister Michele Hooyboer-Winklaar, who is responsible for the event planning of March 18th, has informed Aruba Birdlife Conservation that she would gladly support the First National Bird Count.

is being designed for this purpose and the logistics of attaining and returning the forms to the organization is being worked out. The data of the findings will be made public. More information about the national bird count will be published in January. The most important reason for the national bird count is

its use as a monitoring device of Aruba's birdlife, which at present is under pressure of the invasive boa constrictor. At present a conservative estimation has revealed that no less than 17.000 birds will be consumed in 2010 by the boa. An Aruba without shoco, prikichi, patrishi and trupial is not an option.□

Live Music & Entertainment at Casa Tua Barcelona on Friday Night



ORANJESTAD - Enjoy your Paella and Sangria together with this fantastic live show! The downtown atmosphere is cool and relaxed with its in- and outside seating.

This Flamenco guitar player will perform together with Angela Croes on Friday night. This is a show that shouldn't be missed.

The highlight at Casa Tua Barcelona is also the new lunch specials every weekday from Monday till Friday! A \$9.95 lunch special; Beef tenderloin with a red wine sauce or choose the Grouper Fillet for \$11.95. Both dishes include a soft drink. Fresh Fish lovers can treat the palate to the Whole Red Snapper, served with Rice and a salad.

All days of the week we serve Cold and Hot tapas as appetizers or the delicious Iberian Ham Pata

Negra which we import directly from Andalucía. As your main course you could choose our Paella, traditionally prepared on the spot by our chef! Combine this Spanish dish with our home-made sangria to complete your dinner.

Of course we saved the best for last as no one does an ending better than Casa Tua with their dreamy Tiramisu. If you're into something different we suggest tasting the Espresso Martini Cocktail as dessert, you won't be disappointed.

The best part about such a good ending is that it guarantees you'll be back for more...



Casa Tua Barcelona Downtown open from 11.30am to 10.30pm, Sunday from 5pm to 11pm tel. 588 5695. Casa Tua Palm Beach open from 5pm to 11pm, tel 586 8470

Enjoying Aruba's only Dueling PianoZ

Gerri & Allan Christie celebrate 36th Anniversary



PASEO HERENCIA – On February 15th, Gerri & Allan Christie from Calgary, Alberta, Canada celebrated their 36th wedding anniversary on Aruba at Zissles. They enjoyed the most spectacular dinner show performance of “D’licious” dedicated to lovers and then rocked the night away with the Dueling PianoZ who dedicated the evening to everyone who has loved before. The Christie’s renewed their vows on the beach in 2008 and have been coming to Aruba for more than 15 years. They are owners at the La Cabana and enjoy every second they have on Aruba. They and so many others enjoyed an evening singing along, dancing out of their seats and roaring with laughter at the humor of the talented pianists onstage nightly (except Sundays) at Zissles from 10pm. Dueling PianoZ is completely audience interactive, the

performers base the entire musical show by the guests’ wishes, sent to the pianists on request cards.

Behind the pianos are two of the world’s finest dueling piano entertainers. Meet the performers:

Tammy T

Tammy T is a Connecticut USA born powerhouse of a pianist, entertainer and vocalist. She has performed throughout Europe, Scandinavia, and all over the Caribbean. After many years performing on Aruba, she has become well known with the locals as well as many of the visitors to this island. Over the years, Tammy T has earned the title of “the most popular female pianoentertainer ever.” Behind (and sometimes on top of) the other piano is world class dueling piano entertainer:

Damian Cartier

Damian Cartier is a pianist/



singer/songwriter that has performed on stage all over the United States with artists such as Zac Brown, The Blues Brothers, Stevie Ray Vaughn, and many others. In 2002, Damian started his Dueling Piano career at Jellyroll’s in Atlanta, Georgia. He has since performed at many of the greatest dueling piano clubs across the United States, including New York, New York in Las Vegas, The Tropicana in Atlantic City, and most recently The



Hollywood Hardrock Casino in Florida.

Damian mixes tantalizing music with sidesplitting humor to engage even the most reluctant of audiences, until everyone in the crowd is singing along at full volume, and wearing a smile that is three faces wide! Damian and Tammy T perform together with drummer Allan Manrique live nightly (except Sundays)

from 10pm, immediately following the dinner show performance of “D’licious”. (Dinner show tickets sold separately by reservation) Zissles is located at Paseo Herencia Mall, right next to the cinemas. No cover charge for Dueling PianoZ, no dress code. Excellent tapas food menu served late. Less expensive than you would expect at such a beautiful place. □





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At the Renaissance Mall & Marketplace

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Just before getting off the cab at your downtown Oranjestad destination, ask your driver for campaign vouchers. Fill them out and drop them into the tombola located in the Renaissance Mall or Renaissance Marketplace, and cross your fingers

for good luck! The next raffle will take place at the end of February 2011 for airfare, and resort accommodations for two, and \$500 in

spending money. Who know, it might be you. Winners will be notified, and raffle results posted on www.shoprenaissancearuba.com. The fun however has just begun. Your time downtown Oranjestad will be well spent as the Renaissance Mall & Marketplace is Aruba's premier shopping, dining and dining destinations. And don't forget to ask for the mall's discount booklets bursting with special offers and gifts, valued at more than \$150, valid at stores, restaurants, bars, two casinos and a day spa.

For your greater convenience, this upscale shopping Mecca is open from 10 am to 8 pm, Monday through Saturday, for non-stop, shop opportunities and leisurely vacation strolling and browsing.

Perfectly located in the heart of downtown Oranjestad, Renaissance Mall houses over 60 stores and offers an assortment of restaurants and entertainment options. The Renaissance Mall carries

the latest collections of luxury brands such as Gucci, Carolina Herrera and Louis Vuitton, as well as other high-end lines and one-of-a-kind boutique fashions. The opening of Starbucks' second location is sure to please shoppers needing a quick pick-me-up, while Aquarius and LG Smith Steak and Chophouse, Gari Wasabi guarantee great dining experiences.

An oasis of relaxation can be found at Okeanos Spa, while patrons looking for more exciting entertainment can try their luck at Crystal Casino or check out what's featuring at Crystal Theater—from movie premieres and boxing, soccer,



and football games to live shows, concerts, and fashion shows. The Renaissance Marketplace flaunts a great number of casual eateries and some of the island's most popular bars including Aruba's first Starbucks Coffee besides the state of the art

Renaissance Cinemas, jewelry and souvenirs stores, a travel agency, beach and vacation gear shops and live music most evenings. No matter where or why you travel, there's always something wonderfully new to be found at the Renaissance Mall & Marketplace. □

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Why the Islamic Right should act like the Christian Right



New York – Can democracy and religious fundamentalism co-exist?

That's the question of the moment in the Middle East. In Egypt, the ouster of Hosni Mubarak has raised Western fears of an Islamist takeover by the Muslim Brotherhood. Similar worries surround protest movements in Yemen, Bahrain, and Algeria: Would the fall of secular dictatorships spell the rise of religious ones?

Nine countries in the Middle East where 'winds of change' are blowing

Skeptics point to Gaza and Iran, where popular uprisings empowered decidedly

undemocratic regimes.

Optimists invoke Turkey and Indonesia, where religious parties have competed peacefully in elections and have abided by the rule of law.

But Americans don't have to look to the Middle East to see how fundamentalism can mesh with democracy. Instead, we need only look in the mirror.

Over the past four decades, fundamentalist Christians have surged into United States politics. And, in the process, they have enriched – not constricted – our democracy.

Religious right more liberal

than liberals. Anyone who thinks otherwise should read Jon Shields' terrific 2009 book, "The Democratic Virtues of the Christian Right." A political scientist at Claremont McKenna College, Mr. Shields spent several years observing anti-abortion activists at rallies, protests, and conventions. What he found might surprise American liberals. When orthodox Christians enter the public arena, they demonstrate all the virtues of, well,

classical liberalism: reason, tolerance, and mutual respect. In this sense, they are often more liberal than their opponents on the Left. I can already hear you scoffing. These are the same people who want to ban abortion, gay marriage, and stem-cell research. What's liberal about that? The answer lies in their tactics, which are largely secular. If your opponents don't share your religious premises, the Christian Right has realized, you won't persuade them by invoking yet more religion. Instead, you'll have to move the discussion onto a worldly plane. □

The real Rahm Emanuel



the favorite to win the office. Turnow makes a strong case that Emanuel isn't necessarily who you think he is.

Reality: He may come across as "egocentric," "aloof," "abrupt" and "wary," but Rahm's can be a "soft-spoken, polite and responsive candidate," Turow says. He relates the story of Emanuel's composure as he sat patiently through 12 hours

of proceedings around his residence in Chicago while ignoring the bait thrown by lawyers and rambling speeches of objectors.

Reality: Describing Rahm's demeanor during some old-fashioned handshaking at a CTA el stop, Turow writes that Emanuel "does not have the same natural social gifts of most politicians." Furthermore "he has repeatedly offended important people in Chicago's political circles." That said, he does have the important connections that helped him secure over \$10 million in fundraising, "more than was raised by all of the other mayoral candidates combined." □

Two drifting parallel worlds



The other night I found myself dreaming, drifting simultaneously through two parallel worlds, 800 years apart. In the first vision, I was on the ramparts of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in July 1187. News came in from Galilee that the Crusader Armies had been decimated by the overwhelming Muslim forces of the great Sultan Saladin at the Battle of Hattin. Jerusalem, already an island in an angry, surging Muslim sea, was about to be totally engulfed.

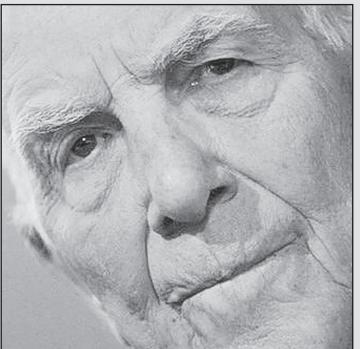
My second dream was in the same place, but I was witnessing a 21st-century Islamic encirclement of modern-day Israel. This second trance was apparently shared by some Israeli columnists who openly fear Egypt's chaotic regime could be followed by an extremist Islamic government, reinforcing that nightmare Crusader scenario of encirclement. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has already asked the United States and other countries to make it clear that any new Egyptian government must not be allowed to abrogate its longstanding peace treaty with Israel. Although Egypt's Army has said it will uphold the accord with Israel, a worrying sign came this week from opposition politician Ayman Nour. Dr. Nour, who is planning to run for president as head of the liberal, secular Party of Tomorrow, declared the Camp David agreement to be "over" and urged Egypt to renegotiate its terms.

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, hailed events in Egypt as an Islamic "awakening" spawned by Iran's earlier revolution. He cheered the events in Cairo, saying they could spark an "irreparable defeat for the United States."

Indignez-vous!

The Nation -- Below you will find an excerpt taken from the first English translation of Stéphane Hessel's "Indignez-vous!," published this week by The Nation. The essay is available in full text only to our subscribers in the print magazine and in the PDF version of the March 7/14 issue. Subscribers, please click here to access the full text PDF. Non-subscribers can subscribe to The Nation and gain access to the full text of "Indignez-vous!" by clicking here.

Ninety-three years. I'm nearing the last stage. The end cannot be far off. How lucky I am to be able to draw on the foundation of my political life: the Resistance



and the National Council of the Resistance's program from sixty-six years ago. The motivation that underlay the Resistance was outrage. We, the veterans of the Resistance movements and fighting forces of Free France, call on the younger generations to revive and carry forward the tradition of the Resistance and its ideas. □

In Australia Diver killed by shark



SYDNEY – An Australian diver was killed by sharks in south Australia on Thursday, police said, in only the second fatal shark attack in Australian waters in more than two years. The abalone diver was thought to have been returning to the surface after a dive when two sharks, believed to be great whites, took him, South Australia Police said in a statement. The skipper on the boat witnessed the incident and returned to shore near Coffin Bay, around 300 kilometers (200 miles) west of the city of Adelaide, the statement added. No other details were immediately available. In August, an Australian surfer died after being mauled by a shark off a Western Australian beach. □

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As Egyptians plan victory march

Islamist position rapidly rising

CAIRO – Egyptian youth leaders moved to set up a new political party on Thursday as the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood played an increasingly important role in preparing for post-Mubarak elections promised within six months.

Pro-democracy leaders plan to bring one million people out on the streets for a "Victory March" on Friday to celebrate Mubarak's ouster, and perhaps remind the generals now in charge of the power of the street that ended Hosni Mubarak's rule. Inspired by Egypt, and a Tunisian revolt before that, protesters have taken to the streets across the Middle East and North Africa. Bahrain has cracked down on anti-government protesters and clashes were reported in Libya and Yemen. Life in Egypt is still far from normal six days after the momentous overthrow of Mubarak, 82, with tanks on Cairo streets, banks closed, worker protests and

demonstrations given voice by revolutionary fervor and schools shut down.

"The Higher Military Council will put matters back on track, but help us," army spokesman General Ismail Etmaan said on state television late on Wednesday night, appealing to Egyptians to stop striking and start getting back to work. "The armed forces do not have future ambitions and want to hand power to the civilian parties when they are strong so that they don't collapse," he said. The Brotherhood has a member on the committee redrafting the constitution,



is on a council set up by activists to protect the revolution and has said it will set up as a political party as soon as laws are changed to let it and others do so. The Brotherhood's

spokesman appeared on state television a few days ago, a first for a movement banned in the Mubarak era. Having been timid in the early days of the revolt, it clearly thinks it is safe to come out. □

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O·P·I

In Bahrain

Police raid protest camp



MANAMA – Troops took control of Manama on Thursday after riot police stormed an anti-government protest camp at dawn and fought demonstrators on the streets, killing four people in Bahrain's worst violence in decades.

Police cleared the capital's Pearl Square of mainly

Shi'ite protesters demanding more say in the Sunni-ruled island kingdom.

"This is an atrocity," Abdul Jalil Khalil, a senior member of the main Shi'ite party Wefaq told. "Whoever took the decision to attack the protest was aiming to kill." Health Minister Faisal bin Yaqoob al-Hamer said three

people were killed and 231 hurt in the police operation and an opposition MP told later a fourth person had died of his wounds.

The crackdown by the Bahraini authorities appeared designed to snuff out the protests before they could gather momentum, unlike the sustained unrest that unseated Egypt's Hosni Mubarak. Inspired by popular revolts in Tunisia and Egypt, the unrest in Bahrain, home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, will alarm Saudi Arabia and the United States, which both see the island's al-Khalifa dynasty as a bulwark against Shi'ite Iran. "I'm not saying that Bahrain is on the brink (but) should it become clear that the regime is in danger, the Saudis will step in," said Gala Riani, senior Middle East analyst at IHS Global Insight in London.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged Bahrain not to use violence against protesters and said those responsible for the crackdown should be brought to justice. "The reports from Bahrain overnight are deeply troubling," he told reporters. □



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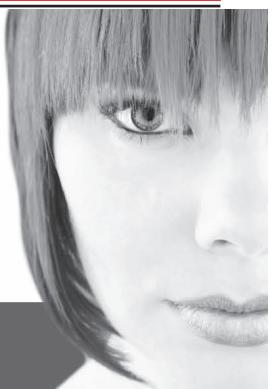
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O·P·I

In Pakistan

Court delays immunity ruling on U.S. prisoner

LAHORE, Pakistan – A Pakistani court on Thursday delayed until next month a hearing into the diplomatic immunity of an American who killed two local men, a case that has pushed ties between Islamabad and Washington toward a breaking point.

The postponement to March 14 will likely exasperate the Obama administration, which has urged Pakistan to free consular employee Raymond Davis and avoid setting a precedent for trials of U.S. officials abroad.

The High Court in the city of Lahore granted a government request to postpone the hearing on whether Davis, a former special forces soldier who shot and killed two men on January 27, is protected by diplomatic immunity. Davis, who is assigned to the U.S. consulate in Lahore, has said he was acting in self-defense during an armed robbery in the city.

White House spokesman Jay Carney said the United States remained focused on ensuring Pakistani authorities respected Davis's diplomatic



immunity and securing his release.

Pakistan is crucial to the success of the U.S. strategy in neighboring Afghanistan, where lawless western border regions are safe havens for Islamist militants targeting U.S. troops.

Yet the government of President Asif Ali Zardari, battling its own insurgency and struggling to hold together a fragile political coalition, is reluctant to ignite popular fury in a case that has galvanized anti-American sentiment.

The U.S. military says it is deeply concerned about the overall situation in Pakistan. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, told a Senate hearing on Thursday that "it looks worse than it has in a long time." □

In Egypt

3 ex-ministers arrested, corruption alleged

By HAMZA HENDAWI

Associated Press

CAIRO – Egyptian authorities arrested on Thursday former Interior Minister Habib el-Adly and two other ex-ministers who are under investigation for corruption, security officials said.

Authorities also arrested

steel tycoon Ahmed Ezz, once a prominent member of the ouster leader Hosni Mubarak's ruling National Democratic Party.

El-Adly, whose job gave him control over the 500,000-strong security forces, has been widely blamed for the deadly brutality used by riot police

against demonstrators in massive protests that began Jan. 25 and forced Mubarak to step down Feb. 11. El-Adly served in his former post for 12 years.

News of el-Adly's arrest followed the detention earlier Thursday of former Housing Minister Ahmed Maghrabi, ex-Tourism Minister Zuheir Garana and Ezz. □

In Libya

Clashes break out on day of protest

TRIPOLI – Clashes broke out in several towns in Libya on Thursday after the opposition called for a day of protests, local people said, while supporters of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi rallied in the capital.

A resident in the eastern city of Benghazi said at least five people had been killed in violence in nearby towns, but with phone lines out of order and access barred for journalists, it was impossible to establish an exact death toll. Opponents of Gaddafi, communicating anonymously online or working in exile, had urged people to protest on Thursday to try to emulate the popular uprisings which unseated long-serving rulers in neighboring Tunisia and Egypt.

In the capital of the oil-exporting country there was no sign of unrest, a reporter said, apart from the pro-Gaddafi demonstrators in the city's Green Square chanting "We are defending Gaddafi!" and waving his portrait.



The source in Benghazi, who said he had been in contact with people in the nearby town of Al Bayda, said the death toll there had risen to five. Two young men were killed on Wednesday and in clashes after their burial three more died, he said.

The same source said there were reports of several deaths in Ajdabiya, about 160 km (100 miles) west of Benghazi. Gaddafi's opponents say they want political freedoms, respect for human rights and an end to corruption. Gaddafi says Libyans enjoy true

democracy through a system of grassroots rule based on institutions called popular committees.

The worst clashes appeared to have taken place in the eastern Cyrenaica region centered on Benghazi, where support for Gaddafi has historically been weaker than in other parts of the country.

Earlier, a resident in Al Bayda told by telephone: "The situation is still complicated. The young people do not want to listen to what the elders say."

Phone connections to the

town, which is 200 km from Benghazi, were not working on Thursday evening and officials were barring journalists from flying to Benghazi from Tripoli. Libya's Quryna newspaper reported that the regional security chief had been removed from his post over the deaths of protesters in Al Bayda.

A group calling itself the Citizens' Forces of Eastern Libya issued a declaration urging an end to the clashes, saying the government would use the violence as a pretext to ignore demands for freedom and justice.

The declaration, obtained by , proposed a truce until March 2 to "give the regime an opportunity to show its commitment toward transparency and

accountability." A source close to the group said it included influential members of Libya's ruling establishment.

Snatches of information about the protests were trickling out from parts of the country on an Arabic-language page used by opposition activists on Facebook, the social networking site.

One post said protesters in Ar Rajban near the border with Algeria set fire to a local government headquarters. In Zenten, south-west of Tripoli, protesters shouted "we will win or die," said another post, which had a photograph of a building on fire.

But in the capital, traffic was moving as normal, banks and shops were open and there was no increased security presence. □

In Brussels

Citizens rejoice 'world record' waffling

BRUSSELS – What would be a humiliation for many turned into a party for Belgium Thursday as the country's citizens marked 249 days without a government, a figure that they are treating as a world record in political waffling.

On every other day, the crisis pits the leaders of 6 million Dutch-speakers against those of 4.5 million French speakers, but people from across the country put aside their differences to celebrate the occasion.

In the French-speaking town of Louvain-la-Neuve, more than 1,000 people bearing the colors of the Belgian flag formed the words "Een-Un" "One is One" in Dutch and French calling for more unity instead of the infighting, sniping and backbiting that has made it impossible to

form a national government. In Dutch-speaking Ghent, organizers failed to persuade 249 people to strip naked, but a few dozen got down to their underwear as part of a party that's expected to draw thousands later Thursday.

In Leuven, a long line of students snaked through the central square for a free portion of fries, Belgium's beloved national dish.

"Finally world champion" the

usually serious *De Standaard* headlined its Thursday

edition, tongue firmly in cheek.

Caretaker Prime Minister Yves Leterme cautioned not to make too much of the day. "Don't overestimate the impact on politicians and decision-makers," he told VRT network.

It is arguable whether 249 really is the world record. Iraq took 249 days to get

the outlines of a government agreement last year, but the approval of that government took a further 40 days. Still, the way things are going, Belgium will have little problem claiming the record whichever standard is used. After general elections on June 13 last year, Belgium's major parties began talks to force through the biggest constitutional reform in decades to keep both linguistic groups happy. But since their interests are often diametrically opposed, they ran into one deadlock after another.

King Albert had to appoint and accept the resignation of one go-between after another as the major parties refused to move far from their pre-election position. It is a process which continues to this day. □

"Meat-free" doesn't fly Cubans prefer pork

HAVANA – Juicy hamburgers and sandwiches stuffed thick with sausage aren't your typical vegetarian fare but that's what is on the menu at El Carmelo, a state-run restaurant originally founded to promote healthy, meat-free eating. "Meat-free" is not a phrase that goes over well in Cuba, an island where long-standing privations have forged a strong, emotional bond with food especially cuisine that once oinked, mooed or clucked. Facing the harsh reality of its tough customers, El Carmelo eventually replaced such vegetarian items as soy picadillo with greasy pork chops.

That has been the fate of the island's half-dozen or so other vegetarian restaurants as well. Opened in the 2000s under the Communist government's go-vegetarian initiative, they have all either closed down completely or replaced soy and



vegetables with meat. It's Cuba's dilemma: How can the government promote healthy eating when the country is full of die-hard carnivores, and when vegetarian meals remind people of an acute food shortage in the early 1990s that made meat an almost unattainable luxury?

Elsewhere in the world, vegetarianism is gaining proponents who cite evidence that eating less meat is good for your heart and reduces the risk of certain types of cancer.

But in Cuba, the island's handful of vegetarians face an uphill battle. Meat is such a central pillar of the Cuban diet, or at least the idea of the Cuban diet, that the rare decision to embrace vegetarianism is widely seen as bordering on insanity. □

In Egypt

Military launches Facebook page



CAIRO – Egypt's new military rulers have launched their own Facebook page to better communicate with the youth who used the social networking site to organize protests that drove Hosni Mubarak from power. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces dedicated the page "to the sons and youth of Egypt who ignited the January 25 revolution and to its martyrs."

It said the page was established by the head of the council, Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, who felt that "fruitful cooperation in the coming period with the honorable sons of Egypt would lead to

stability and security." The military council emphasized it did not have any "political aspirations" and was still committed to a democratic transition to civilian rule, nearly a week after Mubarak stepped down following 30 years of autocratic rule. The page quickly attracted hundreds of supporters, with some comments welcoming "the heroes of Egypt" to the popular networking site and others saying it should be a forum for dialogue between the people and the military. In the first comment, Walid Shahin suggested steps be taken to revive the vital tourism sector following

the uprising, which saw thousands of foreigners flee the country and emptied out its ancient sites, including the Pyramids.

Ahmed Abdullah wrote: "We want an open page so that you can feel the pulse of the street without a mediator." The military remains extremely popular after it allowed the nationwide demonstrations to take place and expressed respect for protesters' demands, while the police remain widely despised as cruel enforcers of the old regime.

However, rights groups have said hundreds of people are still missing following the uprising, with dozens likely being held by the army. Amnesty International said on Thursday it had found fresh evidence of abuse and called on the military to stop torturing detainees. The group said it had interviewed former detainees who described being tortured by the troops, including by whipping and electric shocks, during the mass protests that forced Mubarak to step down. □

In northern Nigeria

Gunmen attack bank, police station

KANO, Nigeria – Gunmen attacked a police station and a bank in northern Nigeria on Thursday, leaving four people dead and one of the assailants' hands blown off when a bomb he was holding exploded, police said.

The simultaneous attacks occurred in the town of Darazo, with those killed including two assailants, a security guard at the bank and a civilian who was at the police station, police commissioner Abdulkadir Mohammed Indabawa said. Authorities said they were unsure who was behind the attacks in Bauchi state, but a series of similar raids in Nigeria's mainly Muslim north has been blamed on an Islamist sect known as Boko



Haram.

"We have one of the attackers with us whose hand was blown off when a homemade bomb exploded in his hand before he could throw it into the police station," the

commissioner said. "He is in hospital being treated." About 15 assailants were involved in the attacks, he said. Police shot and killed two of them at the police station. □

In Ivory Coast

Largest bank closes, crisis grows deeper



take out their savings in fear of a cash shortage. The international community had said it would use financial sanctions to dislodge sitting president Laurent Gbagbo, who is refusing to step down although results issued by his country's election commission and certified by the United Nations showed he had lost the Nov. 28 ballot by nearly 9 percentage points. Among the sanctions slapped on Gbagbo's regime was the revocation of his signature on state accounts at the regional central bank which prints the currency used in Ivory Coast.

Once that happened late last month, the Gbagbo government was no longer able to make deposits into the private banks where government salaries are cashed.

Private banks began shutting down earlier in the week starting with Britain's Standard Chartered, France's BNP-Paribas, Nigeria's Access bank and U.S. bank Citibank. They were joined Thursday by France's Societe Generale, the country's largest financial institution, which announced it was shuttering all 47 branches of its local subsidiary serving 230,000 clients. □

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast – Nine banks, including Ivory Coast's largest, shut down their operations one after another Thursday, further squeezing the country's strongman who is refusing to leave office nearly three months after being declared the loser of the presidential election. Together, the financial institutions halting operations this week hold the vast majority of civil servant bank accounts in the West African country. The move is expected to prevent almost all government employees from receiving their salaries. Panicked people gathered in lines desperately seeking to

In Vietnam

Boat sinking kills 12 from 9 nations

HA LONG BAY, Vietnam – Italian traveler Stefano Corda felt an ominous tilt as dinner was served, but his tour boat crew assured him everything was fine. A few hours later, Corda and his friend jumped for their lives into Vietnam's famed Ha Long Bay as water raced inside the wooden vessel, sucking it down and killing 12 people from nine countries. □



On Top Of The News E-mail:news@arubatoday.com Website:www.arubatoday.com Tel:582-7800 Friday, February 18, 2011

Road woes



After picking up his second foul as well as a technical foul, Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant, second from right, sits on the bench between assistant coach Jim Cleamons and teammate Steve Blake in the first quarter against the Cleveland Cavaliers in an NBA basketball game in Cleveland on Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2011.

Associated Press
Page B4

NFL, players' union agree to mediation

By BARRY WILNER
AP Pro Football Writer
NEW YORK – The NFL and its players' union agreed Thursday to mediation in their labor dispute.

The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, an independent U.S. government agency, will oversee negotiations in Washington beginning Friday — less than two weeks before the collective bargaining agreement between the league and the players expires.

After holding separate discussions with representatives from the league and the union, FMCS director George H. Cohen said both sides agreed to have the agency get involved in the stalled talks.

Continued on page 5



Associated Press
Page B2

Slovenia's Maze wins women's giant slalom

NESHA STARCEVIC

AP Sports Writer

GARMISCH-

PARTENKIRCHEN,

Germany (AP) — Tina Maze became the first Slovenian to win an Alpine skiing world championship title Thursday, riding her advantage from the first run to the gold medal in the women's giant slalom. Maze took silver in the giant slalom in her last two major competitions, at the 2009 worlds and the 2010 Olympics, and finally nailed that elusive gold with a controlled second run on the Kandahar course to win by .09 seconds over Federica Brignone of Italy.

Tessa Worley of France was third.

"I had enough silver by now," Maze said. "Gold is a nice color. I've been so close before — I've lost by a few hundredths — and today it worked out for me."

Brignone, daughter of former Italian World Cup winner Maria Rosa Quario, came into the race with only two podium finishes in her career. But one of them was a second place in the final World Cup giant slalom before the worlds, 10 days ago in Zwiesel, Germany. "It was really soft at the bottom, there were many bumps. But I really wanted this medal," Brignone said after completing the course set by an Italian coach. Brignone said she was



Slovenia's Tina Maze clears a gate during the first run of the women's giant slalom, at the Alpine World Skiing Championships in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, Thursday, Feb. 17, 2011.

Associated Press

inspired by teammate Christof Innerhofer's three medals.

"After the first run I just decided to risk everything and start over from zero and that helped me, because that's how it works at the world championships — either you win everything or you lose everything," she said. Worley jumped from 19th to third for the bronze medal. Winner of three of five giant slalom races in the World Cup this season, Worley was considered the top favorite but finished 2.12 seconds behind Maze in the

first run.

"After the first leg, I struggled to believe I could do it. But I thought only about my skiing, and I told myself, 'Go flat out, it's the world championships, you have got nothing at all to lose,'" Worley said.

"I just wanted to go for it, and it really paid off. I didn't think it would be enough for a medal, I thought I would be top 10, then top 5 ... it's super."

Denise Karbon of Italy was fourth. Olympic champion Viktoria Rebensburg was fifth and her German teammate and local favorite Maria Riesch skied out in the second run.

Maze, who also won silver in the super-combined, took advantage of an early start number on a course softened by mild weather in the first run.

After a two-hour race delay because of thick fog, Maze was first out of the gate and stayed ahead as more than 100 starters came down the Kandahar course.

"It felt like forever. We were waiting in the start house and every half hour they told us there was another delay." But when it finally did start, "I felt like a bull, I couldn't wait to get going," Maze said. □

said.

"I wanted to show my speed and what I could do. I didn't realize I was doing that well," she said.

In the second run, the top 30 race in reverse order and Maze was the final starter.

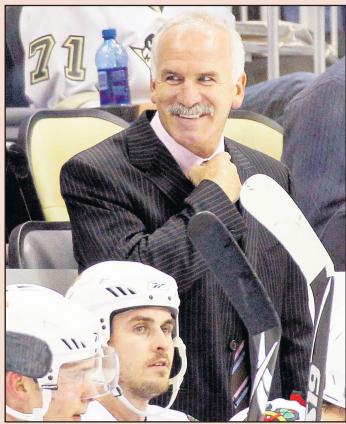
"I heard that the bottom part of the course was deteriorating, it was important to let the skis run," Maze said.

Maze, who lost the Olympic gold to Rebensburg by .04 seconds last year, celebrated the title with a cartwheel in the finish area. She clocked 2 minutes, 20.54 seconds, with Brignone 0.09 seconds back and Worley .48 seconds adrift.

"I have Swiss skis, three Italian coaches and it's the first gold medal for Slovenia, so I think I made a lot of countries happy today," Maze said. "We've always had good athletes (in Slovenia) but nobody could grab gold. I'm sure a lot of people will be very happy. It shows that even if we're a small country we can be on top."

Worley was an early starter in the second run, while the piste was still in better shape. "It was surely easier for me than for those who came at the end of the race," Worley said. □

Blackhawks coach undergoing tests



In this Sept. 28, 2010 file photo, Chicago Blackhawks coach Joel Quenneville stands behind his bench during a preseason NHL hockey game against the Pittsburgh Penguins in Pittsburgh. Associated Press

ANDREW SELIGMAN

AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Chicago Blackhawks coach Joel Quenneville was undergoing tests on Thursday after being hospitalized with an undisclosed ailment. Although the NHL champions provided no official update, assistant coach Mike Haviland says the coach was having tests. When they spoke after Wednesday's 3-1 victory over Minnesota, Quenneville was "very pleased and very happy" about the game and "was in really good spirits." "He was joking and laughing on the phone," Haviland said on Thursday. "So it was good to hear."

Exactly what was ailing Quenneville remained unclear. Haviland said they didn't discuss it.

TV analyst Kelly Chase, who once played for Quenneville, said on Wednesday that the coach was hospitalized for internal bleeding and doctors were trying to determine the cause. He also said the coach hoped to be back for Friday's game against Columbus.

Quenneville started experiencing discomfort late Tuesday at his suburban Chicago home, went to the emergency room and was admitted early Wednesday. □

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Stoll's SO goal lifts Kings over Blue Jackets

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Jarret Stoll had the only goal in the shootout, leading Los Angeles past the Columbus Blue Jackets 4-3 on Wednesday to extend the Kings' points streak to 10 games.

NHL Roundup

The Kings' spurt is their best run in 31 years. Los Angeles can match the franchise record when it plays the eighth of a 10-game road trip at the New York Rangers on Thursday.

Los Angeles also has points in eight straight road games for its top surge since 1984. The Blue Jackets forced overtime on Kris Russell's goal with 1:23 left in regulation.

Andrei Loktionov had a goal and an assist, and Justin Williams and Drew Doughty also scored for the Kings. Jonathan Quick had 21 saves through overtime and stopped all three shots in the shootout. Rick Nash and Jake Voracek each had a goal and an assist, and Derek MacKenzie had two assists for Columbus, which had won five of six. Mathieu Garon had 26 saves.

Capitals 7, Ducks 6

At Anaheim, California, Alexander Semin completed his seventh career hat trick by scoring the tying and go-ahead goals in the final minutes as Washington rallied to snap its three-game losing streak with a victory over Anaheim.

Semin tied it with 8:23 to play and put the Capitals ahead with 1:47 left, ending the supremely streaky scorer's 17-game goal drought.

Ryan Getzlaf and Corey Perry had a goal and three assists apiece for the Ducks, whose four-game winning streak ended.

Flyers 4, Panthers 2

At Sunrise, Florida, Mike

Richards and Andreas Nodl scored 65 seconds apart in the first period as Eastern Conference-leading Philadelphia held on to beat Florida.

James van Riemsdyk also scored for the Flyers, who improved their NHL-best road record to 19-6-3. Daniel Briere had an empty-net goal and two assists.

Rostislav Olesz and Booth scored for the Panthers.

Devils 3, Hurricanes 2

At Newark, New Jersey, Ilya Kovalchuk scored his 20th goal of the season and sixth in seven games as New Jersey took another step in its unlikely playoff push by beating Carolina.

Brian Rolston and Patrik Elias blew the game open with goals early in the third period as the Devils won for the 13th time in 16 games and moved within 12 points of eighth place in the Eastern Conference.

Johan Hedberg made 25 saves for New Jersey, which was 27 points below the postseason cutoff line heading into its game against Tampa Bay on Jan. 9. The Devils are 13th in the East.

Penguins 3, Avalanche 2, OT

At Denver, Tyler Kennedy scored a power-play goal 4:10 into overtime and Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 29 shots as Pittsburgh sent Colorado to its ninth straight loss.

Joe Vitale and Jordan Staal added goals for the injury-plagued Penguins, who snapped a two-game skid.



Los Angeles Kings' Jarret Stoll, left, scores a goal against Columbus Blue Jackets goalie Mathieu Garon, right, in a shootout during an NHL hockey game in Columbus, Ohio, Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2011. The Kings won 4-3.

Associated Press

Sergei Samsonov and Tuomo Ruutu scored for eighth-place Carolina.

Penguins 3, Avalanche 2, OT

At Denver, Tyler Kennedy scored a power-play goal 4:10 into overtime and Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 29 shots as Pittsburgh sent Colorado to its ninth straight loss.

Joe Vitale and Jordan Staal added goals for the injury-plagued Penguins, who snapped a two-game skid.

Chris Stewart and Cameron Gaunce scored for the Avalanche, who are in the midst of their longest skid since moving to Denver for the 1995-96 season.

Maple Leafs 2, Sabres 1

At Buffalo, New York, Joey Crabb's short-handed goal midway through the third period snapped Toronto's seven-game losing streak at Buffalo.

Phil Kessel also scored for Toronto, which hadn't won in

Buffalo since Dec. 12, 2008.

The Maple Leafs have beaten their Northeast Division rival only twice in 15 meetings. Paul Gaustad scored for the

In other NHL games it was Los Angeles 4, Columbus 3, SO; Toronto 2, Buffalo 1; New Jersey 3, Carolina 2; Philadelphia 4, Florida 2; Chicago 3, Minnesota 1; Pittsburgh 3, Colorado 2, OT; Calgary 4, Dallas 2; and Washington 7, Anaheim 6. □

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late show: 11:30

I AM NUMBER FOUR daily: 5:00 - 7:30 - 9:45 NEW

matinee: 12:30 - 2:45 PG-13

late show: 12:00

BIG MOMMAS HOUSE 3 daily: 4:45 - 7:00 - 9:30 NEW

matinee: 12:00 - 2:30 SP PG-13

late show: 11:45

SANCTUM 3D daily: 4:45 - 7:00 - 9:30 NEW R

matinee: 12:00 - 2:30

late show: 11:30

JUST GO WITH IT daily: 9:30 PG-13

matinee: 12:00

THE KINGS SPEECH daily: 5:45 - 8:30 PG-13

matinee: 12:15 - 3:00

late show: 11:00

JUSTIN BIEBER: NEVER SAY NEVER3D daily: 4:45 - 7:00 G

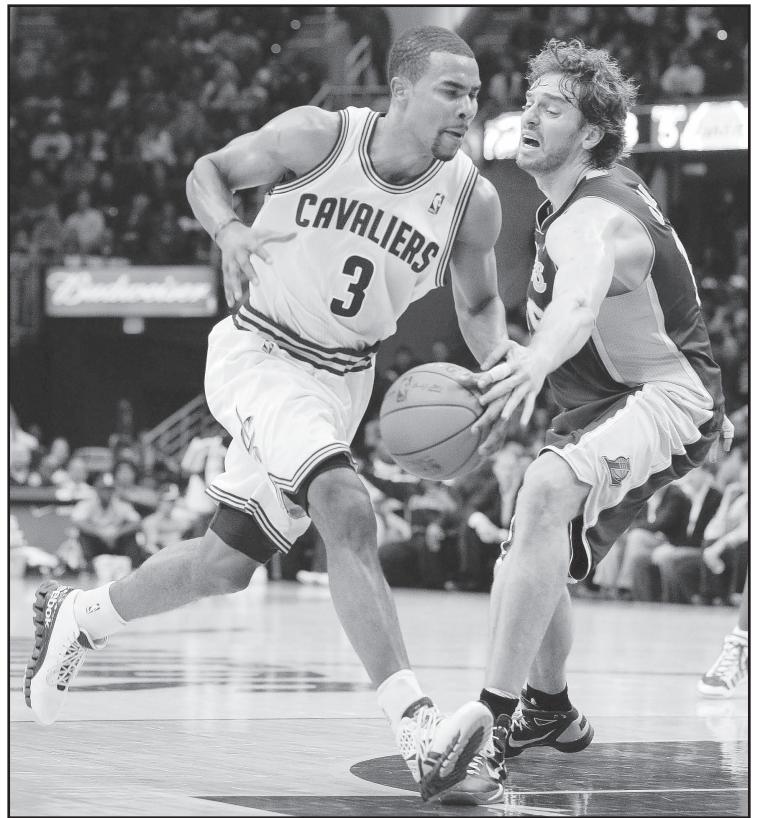
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late show: 1:00 - 3:00

SP = subtítulos en Español

Matinee: sat - sun | Late show: fri & sat

Cavaliers avenge 55-point defeat against Lakers



Cleveland Cavaliers' Ramon Sessions (3) drives to the basket against Los Angeles Lakers' Pau Gasol in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Cleveland on Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2011. The Cavaliers won 104-99.

Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) — Looking nothing like two-time defending NBA champions, the Lakers dropped their third straight game, a stunning 104-99 loss

Wednesday to the Cleveland Cavaliers — the league's worst team, which avenged a 55-point embarrassment against Los Angeles last month.

NBA Roundup

Ramon Sessions came off the bench and scored a season-high 32 points for the Cavs, who were beaten 112-57 by the Lakers on Jan. 11. That loss was No. 11 in a league-record streak that eventually reached 26 before Cleveland ended it last week with an overtime win against L.A.'s less-heralded squad, the Clippers.

Pau Gasol had 30 points and 20 rebounds for the Lakers. Celtics 94, Nets 80

At Boston, Paul Pierce bounced back from one of the worst games of his career with 31 points to help Boston head into the All-Star break with the best record in the East.

Pierce, who was 0 for 10 and had one point in Sunday's victory over Miami, scored seven points during a 16-0 run late in the fourth quarter as the Celtics turned a one-point deficit into a blowout. Brook Lopez scored 18 points and Devin Harris had 16 for the Nets.

Heat 103, Raptors 95

At Toronto, Dwyane Wade scored 28 points, and LeBron James had 23 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists for Miami.

Chris Bosh scored 25 points in his first game in Toronto against his former team, which lost for the 17th time in 19 games.

Andrea Bargnani scored 17 of his 38 points in the fourth quarter and DeMar DeRozan finished with 24, but the Raptors never led after the first 6 minutes of the game. Mavericks 116, Kings 100

NBA, Department of State announce trip to India

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. Department of State and the NBA will make their first joint trip to India as part of their 2011 sports envoy program.

Hall of Famer George Gervin and two-time WNBA champion Katie Smith will visit Mumbai and New Delhi

from Feb. 22 to March 2, the league announced on Wednesday.

They will conduct clinics, meet with students and attend the finals of the Mahindra NBA Challenge, a basketball league run by the NBA and India's basketball federation.

NBA officials, having seen

points for the Hawks, who lost for the third time in four games.

Trail Blazers 103, Hornets 96 At Portland, Oregon, LaMarcus Aldridge scored 34 points to help Portland win its season-high sixth straight game.

Wesley Matthews added 24 points for Portland, which has been able to win despite injuries to three-time All-Star Brandon Roy and starting center Marcus Camby.

David West had 27 points and Willie Green added 24 for the Hornets.

Clippers 98, Timberwolves 90

At Minneapolis, Blake Griffin stole the show in a matchup of All-Star power forwards with 29 points, eight rebounds and five assists to lead Los Angeles past Minnesota.

Former Timberwolves player Randy Foye scored 21 points and Ryan Gomes added 18 to help the Clippers to just their second win on an eight-game road trip.

All-Star Kevin Love had 18 points and 18 rebounds for his 42nd double-double in a row.

In other NBA games it was Orlando 101, Washington 76; Miami 103, Toronto 95; Boston 94, New Jersey 80; Cleveland 104, L.A. Lakers 99; Detroit 115, Indiana 109, OT; New York 102, Atlanta 90; L.A. Clippers 98, Minnesota 90; Dallas 116, Sacramento 100; Philadelphia 114, Houston 105; Golden State 107, Utah 100; Denver 94, Milwaukee 87; and Portland 103, New Orleans 96. □

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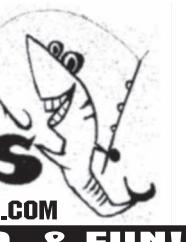
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NFL

Continued from page B5

Negotiations broke down last week, leading to the cancellation of one planned session.

"Due to the extreme sensitivity of these negotiations and consistent with the FMCS's long-standing practice, the agency will refrain from any public comment concerning the future schedule and/or the status of those negotiations until further notice," Cohen said.

NFL spokesman Greg Aiello told The Associated Press in an e-mail: "We are now in mediation."

In a statement, NFLPA spokesman George Atallah said: "The NFLPA has always focused on a fair collective bargaining agreement through negotiations. We hope that this renewed effort, through mediation, will help the players and owners reach a successful deal."

The FMCS website says it "provides free mediation services in contract negotiation disputes between employers and their unionized employees. All the parties have to do is make a request." Mediation is not binding, FMCS public affairs director John Arnold said in a telephone interview.

"Our agency director will be working with the parties to assist them in reaching a voluntary, mutually acceptable agreement," Arnold said.

Cohen said in a statement that the negotiations will be conducted "under my auspices."

News of mediation is the first positive sign after several months of infrequent negotiations. It also comes only days after the NFL filed an unfair labor practice charge against the NFLPA with the National Labor Relations Board. Monday's filing said the union "consistently has failed to confer in good faith" during negotiations for a new contract and the union's "conduct amounts to surface bargaining and an anticipatory refusal to bargain."

Aiello told the AP the mediation would not have an effect on the NLRB complaint. □

Earnhardt's legacy: a safer NASCAR

CHRIS JENKINS

AP Sports Writer

DAYTONA BEACH, Florida (AP) — Michael Waltrip still remembers what he felt the first time he smacked into one of the impact-absorbing SAFER barriers that sprouted on racetrack walls in the wake of Dale Earnhardt's death.

Or, rather, what he didn't feel. As his car skidded toward the wall, a thought flashed through Waltrip's mind: He was planning a vacation, but figured he now would be headed to the hospital instead. "We were going to Costa Rica the next day," Waltrip said. "As soon as it blew, I thought, 'I'm not going anywhere. I'm going to be eating out of a straw is what's going to happen to me.'" And then ... nothing.

"I braced myself and went up and hit it, and I was like, 'That didn't hurt! That didn't hurt at all!'" Waltrip said. Like so many drivers since Earnhardt died, Waltrip walked away unscathed. With the 10-year anniversary of Earnhardt's fatal accident looming at Daytona International Speedway this week, the NASCAR great's legacy can be seen every time one of today's drivers waves to the crowd and remembers to thank his sponsors on TV after a crash that might have sent him to the hospital — or worse — not so long ago. Earnhardt's loss was the wake-up call that caused a safety revolution, so much so that there hasn't been a driver death on the track in NASCAR's top three divisions since then. It was a major change for a sport that had been at the back of the pack when it came to driver safety. "If you were in my shoes

10 years ago, 11 years ago, and you said to me then, 'Ten years from now all these things are going to happen,' I'd say, 'You're nuts. There's not the willingness, the mindset, the dedication; it will never happen,'" Jeff Burton said. "I would have been wrong. We take for granted a lot of stuff. Drivers coming in today have no concept of what this was like 10, 11 years ago. No concept."

Earnhardt's death, and the national scrutiny it brought to NASCAR, resulted in several significant safety improvements:

—Adopting the HANS device, a head and neck restraint collar that was being used in other forms of auto racing but went largely ignored in NASCAR until Earnhardt's death. Head and neck restraints now are required in NASCAR and may be responsible for preventing several deaths or serious injuries.

—SAFER barriers, impact-absorbing walls that were

being developed before

Earnhardt's death. Increased

interest and investment from

NASCAR accelerated their

implementation, and today

the so-called "soft" walls line

tracks from coast to coast.

—Better seats and improved

cockpits.

Looking back, drivers can't believe how unsafe their seats were before Earnhardt's death.

"(Today's seats) compared to his seat? Night and day," Robby Gordon said. "I don't know how to explain it any other way than that. But that's what he chose to drive in, and that's what made him comfortable in all those races prior to that. Us race car drivers, we become

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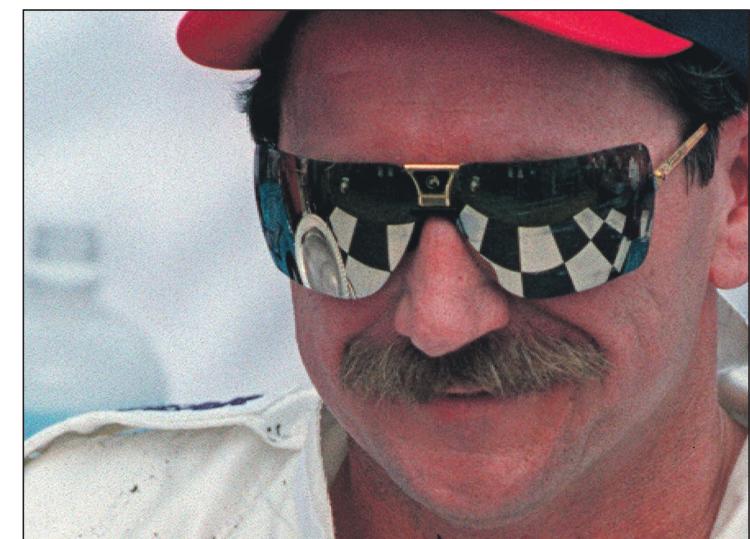
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This 1995, file photo shows Dale Earnhardt in victory lane after winning the International Race of Champions in Daytona Beach, Fla. Earnhardt was involved in a NASCAR Daytona 500 crash Feb. 18, 2001, resulting later in his death. The 10-year anniversary of Earnhardt's fatal accident falls on Friday, Feb. 18, 2011, just two days before the season-opening Daytona 500, NASCAR's version of the Super Bowl.

Associated Press

invincible — this is what I've done forever, and it hasn't hurt me."

Since then, teams have switched to carbon-fiber seats similar to those used in open-wheel racing and installed braces to prevent drivers' heads from violently snapping from side to side during a hard hit.

Then came NASCAR's new chassis design, formerly referred to as the "Car of Tomorrow" — another big step forward in safety, designed to shield drivers from impacts.

Still, drivers know racing has risks, and another death could be waiting around the next turn. □

NASCAR or Indy?

Danica undecided on plans for 2012

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.

(AP) — Danica Patrick's season hasn't even started, and the main thing everybody wants to know is what she'll do next year. Going into Saturday's NASCAR Nationwide Series opener at Daytona International Speedway, Patrick says she doesn't know her plans for 2012 and beyond. She acknowledges her contracts in both NASCAR and IndyCar are up at the end of this season—and presumably, she'll have to choose whether she wants to pursue

stock car racing on a full-time basis.

Patrick says she isn't under any pressure and there's no need to rush into a decision. "I have a lot of time to figure it out and let things unfold," Patrick said Thursday. "I think it's just going to be a matter of letting it run its course this year and making the most of every time I'm in a stock car, as well as an IndyCar, and just seeing what opportunities arise. I think that it will become obvious in the end, but it's important to wait for that and not force anything." □

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Wozniacki reaches quarterfinals in Dubai

MICHAEL CASEY

AP Sports Writer

DUBAI, United Arab

Emirates (AP) — Caroline Wozniacki moved to within one victory of regaining the No. 1 ranking after beating Japan's Ayumi Morita 6-1, 6-0 Thursday to reach the quarterfinals of the Dubai Championships.

The 20-year-old Dane, who lost the top spot to Kim Clijsters on Monday, was never seriously challenged by the 57th-ranked Japanese qualifier. She now must beat Shahar Peer of Israel to return to No. 1. Wozniacki lost to Peer in the third round last year. "To be honest, I don't really think about it," Wozniacki said. "If I play well, the ranking will come automatically. For me, tomorrow I'm going to go out there and play my best. That's all I can do."

In earlier matches, U.S. Open finalist Vera Zvonareva and French Open champion Francesca Schiavone were both eliminated in the third round. Alisa Kleybanova beat Russian teammate Zvonareva 6-3, 6-2, while Svetlana Kuznetsova defeated Schiavone 1-6, 6-0, 7-5.

Samantha Stosur of Australia



Francesca Schiavone from Italy returns the ball to Russia's Svetlana Kuznetsova during the fourth day of the Dubai WTA Tennis Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Thursday Feb. 17, 2011.

Associated Press

also reached the quarterfinals, beating Swiss veteran Patty Schnyder 6-3, 6-4, while Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland defeated Marion Bartoli of France 6-3, 6-2 and Peer overcame a sluggish start to beat Yanina Wickmayer of Belgium 3-6, 6-4, 6-1. Former No. 1 Jelena Jankovic rallied to beat Estonia's Kaia

Kanepi 2-6, 6-3, 7-5 in nearly 2 1/2 hours. Italy's Flavia Pennetta came back from 4-1 down in the third set to beat seventh-seeded Victoria Azarenka of Belarus 6-3, 6-7 (2), 6-4. Pennetta seemed on her way to a relatively straightforward victory but she blew a 5-1 lead in the second to allow

the ninth-ranked Azarenka to level the match. Pennetta strained a muscle in her lower left leg early in the match but kept playing. She later pulled out of her doubles match Thursday with Schiavone but said she "hoped" to be able to play her match Friday against Kleybanova. □



Lleyton Hewitt, from Australia, returns a shot against Juan Martin del Potro, from Argentina, during a third round match of the SAP Open tennis tournament in San Jose, Calif., Friday, Feb. 11, 2011.

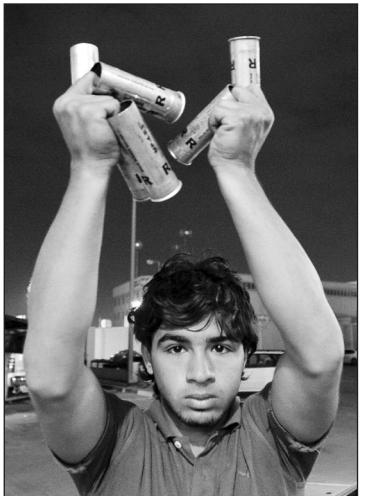
Associated Press

Hewitt and Fish advance in Memphis

MEMPHIS (AP) —

Canada's Milos Raonic beat No. 2 seed Fernando Verdasco 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (5) on Wednesday in the first round of the Regions Morgan Keegan Championships, his second victory over the Spaniard in four days. Raonic, aged 20 and the fastest rising young star on the ATP Tour, beat Verdasco on Sunday in the finals of the SAP Open in San Jose for his first career title. He has risen from 159 in the world to start the year to 59 this week. "I'm happy with the outcome, but I think there are things I can improve on the match that I'll take time to think about," Raonic said. "But I can't be unsatisfied with this result." He said beating Verdasco on Sunday did provide a confidence boost. A frustrated Verdasco lamented having to play the hard-serving Raonic twice in conditions that favor his game and not Verdasco's. The points were quickly played. "For me that's not a real match in tennis," Verdasco said. "I hope to play soon against him in clay court to show him what it is to play tennis, and play rallies, and run, and not only serve." □

Racing canceled at Bahrain F1 circuit amid unrest



A Bahraini anti-government demonstrator shows tear gas canisters fired by riot police attacking campers at the Pearl roundabout, in Manama, Bahrain, early Thursday morning, Feb. 17, 2011.

Associated Press

MICHAEL CASEY

AP Sports Writer

DUBAI, United Arab

Emirates (AP) — The GP2

Asia Series race in Bahrain was canceled Thursday amid anti-government protests that have left four dead overnight — less than a month before the season-opening Formula One race at the same circuit. The Bahrain Grand Prix is scheduled for March 13, with F1 workers due to be in the country 10 days earlier. Organizers said the race slated for Friday and Saturday was called off at request of the Bahrain Motorsport Federation "due to force majeure."

No further information was available.

FIA has expressed confidence that the anti-government protests on the island nation in the Gulf would not prevent the running of next month's F1 race.

"We are constantly in touch

with both the national authorities and local authorities," FIA spokesman Norman Howell said. "We are monitoring the situation." Thousands of protesters poured into the country's main square Tuesday in an Egypt-style rebellion that sharply escalated pressure on authorities.

Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa made a rare national TV address, offering condolences for the deaths, pledging an investigation into the killings and promising to push ahead with reforms.

Riot police with tear gas and clubs early Thursday broke up a camp that anti-government protesters had set up on the square, killing four people, according to medical officials. Armed patrols prowled neighborhoods throughout the

day and tanks appeared in the streets for the first time. Public gatherings were banned Thursday and the city was virtually locked down. F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone said in an interview with London's Daily Telegraph on Tuesday that protesters could gain global attention by "making a problem on the start grid."

Ecclestone's comments came after Nabeel Rajab, the vice president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, spoke of his fears the race could be targeted.

Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa, chief executive officer of the Bahrain International Circuit, has said security remains of paramount concern and that it was also monitoring the situation. □

Earnhardt's loss still felt 10 years after death

JENNA FRYER,
AP Auto Racing Writer
DAYTONA BEACH, Florida

(AP) — After 462 races, a sad-sack losing streak that had spanned 16 long years, Michael Waltrip's first trip to Victory Lane — at the Daytona 500 no less — should have been the happiest moment of his life.

It was, for 15 or so minutes, anyway.

Then longtime friend Ken Schrader stopped by to speak privately to Waltrip. Schrader leaned in and whispered the news that brought the party to a crashing halt: The accident on the last lap was bad, and Dale Earnhardt was in trouble.

Waltrip at first didn't seem to hear. So Schrader again leaned in to Waltrip's ear. The smile faded from Waltrip's face, the light in his eyes darkened, and he spent the next few hours simply going through the motions of a victory celebration.

When it was time for the customary champagne toast, he declined and headed to his motorhome for his first moments alone with his wife since crossing the finish line.

"I remember my words, I said to her, 'He's going to be OK, right?'" Waltrip recalled. "I was just hoping she was going to say he's hurt really bad."

"And she said, 'No, he's dead.'"

Earnhardt was the toughest man to ever climb in a stock car, the face of American racing and the blue collar everyman the fans could relate to. His death — in a crash that insiders viewed as rather routine — stunned NASCAR, raising questions about mortality, safety and moving on.

The 10-year anniversary of Earnhardt's fatal accident falls on Friday, just two days before the season-opening Daytona 500, NASCAR's version of the Super Bowl. This season, the past has a chokehold on the season's biggest race. The typical excitement and optimism that comes with each new year have been overshadowed by

memories of The Intimidator, whose death still very much defines NASCAR and those he left behind.

There's Dale Earnhardt Jr., the prodigal son forced out of his father's shadow the day Dale Sr. died. Savvy marketing had made the introverted and sometimes socially awkward kid a star, but it didn't prepare him for the crush of attention from his father's adoring fan base. He's been stoic in facing the anniversary questions, but it's clear he wants everyone to move on.

Richard Childress, the team owner who never wanted to return to a race track after the loss of his best friend, has tried so hard to block the memories of that day. The topic still makes him obviously uncomfortable, though he understands the public interest that still accompanies Earnhardt. Then there's Waltrip, who talks freely about the friend who gave him his big break at the journeyman age of 38. He found some peace this past year in writing the memoir released last month "In the Blink of an Eye."



In this file photo taken Feb. 18, 2001, Dale Earnhardt's (3) window pops out of the car after being hit by Ken Schrader (36) during the Daytona 500 at the Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla. Getting by are drivers Bobby Hamilton (55), Jeremy Mayfield (12), Bill Elliott (9) and Ricky Rudd (28). Earnhardt had to be cut from his battered car and was taken to Halifax Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead of head injuries. The 10-year anniversary of Earnhardt's fatal accident falls on Friday, Feb. 18, 2011, just two days before the season-opening Daytona 500, NASCAR's version of the Super Bowl.

Associated Press

For all, Earnhardt's death remains a raw, open wound. No matter the approach to the anniversary, the reality is the same: Everything changed the day Earnhardt died — for the people who loved him and for the sport he left behind — and it has taken every bit of the last decade to

recover.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. was 26, starting his second full season at NASCAR's highest level, when his father was killed. Although he'd won two championships in NASCAR's second-tier series, two 2000 Cup races as a rookie with Dale Earnhardt Inc., and was being marketed like a rock star by Budweiser, he was very much under his father's thumb.

Big E expected a lot of Junior. Although there was always a father's love, he wasn't exactly easy on his namesake. Life as the son of the seven-time champion was a constant lesson in where to go, what to do and how to be more professional.

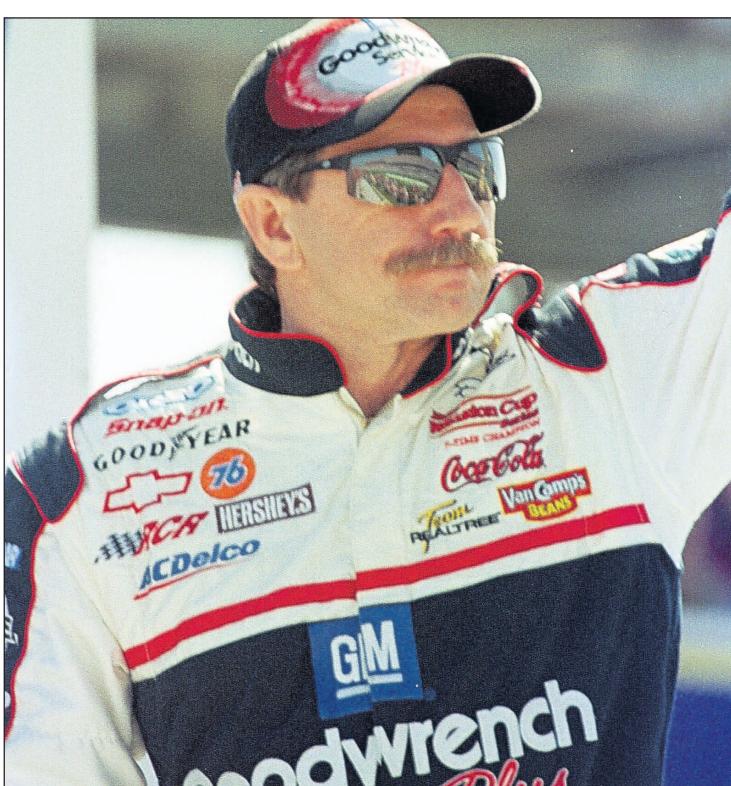
When Earnhardt died, his son had to figure it out on his own. But there was no newfound freedom. Instead he inherited the responsibility of safeguarding his father's legacy, ensuring the health of the family race team and satisfying the rabid fan base he'd suddenly inherited.

And of course, he still had to live up to his last name. As NASCAR rolled into Rockingham, North Carolina, five days after Earnhardt's death, his son wanted to be anywhere but there.

"After that happened, I never wanted to see another race track or race car again. We went to Rockingham, and I went because I felt responsible to be there," he said.

When the green flag fell, Earnhardt Jr. crashed before finishing even a single lap. "I was embarrassed. It was embarrassing because it was on television and in front of all the fans," he said. "But I really had no interest in being there. It was embarrassing to wreck a car, tore that car up, but it didn't break my heart any worse than it was already broken. I couldn't feel any worse than I was already feeling."

It took him about a week to accept his new life and its tremendous responsibilities. "I got to thinking, 'Well, what else am I going to do? My dad gave me this opportunity, and I would be a fool to squander it,'" he recalled. It has not been an easy ride. There have been flashes of success, and one brief flirtation, in 2004, at winning a Cup championship. But it has been pocked by a fragmented relationship with Earnhardt's widow, Teresa, that ultimately drove Junior out of DEI at the end of the 2007 season. □



In this file photo taken Feb. 18, 2001, Dale Earnhardt waves to fans during race introduction before the start of the Daytona 500 at the Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla. Earnhardt was involved in a serious crash in the race. The 10-year anniversary of Earnhardt's fatal accident falls on Friday, Feb. 18, 2011, just two days before the season-opening Daytona 500, NASCAR's version of the Super Bowl.

Associated Press

With eyes on Mideast

Wall Street edges up on optimism

NEW YORK – U.S. stocks piled on a vertiginous two-year advance on Thursday as investors dismissed a rise in jobless claims and consumer prices to focus on positive earnings and regional business activity.

The technology sector showed strength, with Nvidia Corp (NVDA.O) up 9.4 percent to \$25.58 a day after a bullish revenue forecast.

The S&P 500 hit a 32-month high a day after doubling its value in less than two years, the steepest 100 percent gain since the Great Depression. U.S. crude futures jumped as civilian unrest in some oil-producing regions kept focus on supply, boosting shares of energy companies. The S&P energy sector (.GSPE) gained 0.9 percent.

Stocks continued to overlook Iran's intentions to send two navy vessels through the Suez Canal in a move that Israel has called a "provocation" and that is putting Egypt's new military rulers in an unwelcome diplomatic spotlight.

"Geopolitical issues have been pushed aside, maybe prematurely," said Brian Lazorishak, a



money manager at Chase Investment Counsel in Charlottesville, Virginia.

"People have been focusing on the positives like the outlook for corporations and a good earnings season," he said.

Lazorishak added that the uptick in stocks was related more to a lack of sellers than to enthusiastic buying. Dwindling volume could be a reflection of that.

Average daily volume on the New York Stock Exchange, NYSE Amex and Nasdaq has been 7.5 billion shares in February, sharply below the 8.5 billion shares traded daily on average over the same month last year.

The Dow Jones industrial average (.DJI) added 29.14 points, or 0.24 percent, at

12,317.31. The Standard & Poor's 500 Index (.SPX) gained 3.67 points, or 0.27 percent, at 1,339.99. The Nasdaq Composite Index (.IXIC) rose 5.52 points, or 0.20 percent, at 2,831.08.

Dr Pepper Snapple Group Inc (DPS.N) posted quarterly profit that beat estimates and gave an upbeat forecast and its shares jumped 5.6 percent to \$36.18.

Its competitor Coca Cola Co (K.O) was the top gainer in the Dow industrials, up 1.7 percent to \$64.48. Coke also announced an increase in its dividend.

Data storage equipment maker NetApp Inc (NTAP.O) forecast weaker-than-expected profit, blaming a components shortage. □

Consumer prices show inflation turning up



pumping money into the economy.

"Inflation has bottomed out, that's actually what the Fed would like to see happen and these numbers are by no means alarming," said Stuart Hoffman, chief economist at PNC Financial in Pittsburgh. "The question is, if inflation is coming back, how fast and how far? This data tells me it's not coming back quickly."

The increase in core prices, which was a touch above economists' expectations for a 0.1 percent gain, was driven by a 1 percent surge in the cost of apparel and a 2.2 percent jump in airline fares. Shelter costs, which account for 40 percent of core CPI, rose for a fourth straight month. □

WASHINGTON – Core consumer prices rose at the quickest pace in 15 months in January, suggesting a long period of slowing inflation had run its course. The core Consumer Price Index, which excludes volatile food and energy costs, increased 0.2 percent last month after a 0.1 percent



The Weather pushes Duke earnings higher

NEW YORK – A frigid winter and sales of assets boosted Duke Energy's net income 23 percent in the fourth quarter.

The company earned \$427 million, or 32 cents per share, compared with \$346 million, or 26 cents per share, a year earlier. Excluding one-time items, the electric and gas utility earned 21 cents per share.

Revenue rose to \$3.45 billion from \$3.11 billion.

The company's regulated businesses, especially in North and South Carolina, performed well in the last three months of 2010. Revenue grew 10 percent, helped by rate increases and cold weather. But revenue from the company's smaller commercial power business fell 30 percent in the quarter as customers in Ohio switched to cheaper competitors.

For the full year, Duke's earnings rose 20 percent to \$1 per share from 83 cents per share in 2009. Last year's steamy summer boosted demand for electricity to run air conditioners. Then a cold and snowy winter across much of Duke's service territory led to a demand in gas and electricity for

heating.

"It was my perfect year," said Duke CEO Jim Rogers in an interview.

This should also be a big year for Rogers and Duke. Last month it announced plans to buy Progress Energy for \$13.7 billion. If approved, Duke will become the largest utility in the U.S. Rogers expects the deal close this year.

Duke and other utilities have been struggling since the recession and financial crisis of 2008 cut deeply into demand for electricity. Also electricity prices have stayed low even as the economy has begun to pick up because natural gas, which is used to generate electricity and often to set its price, remains cheap.

Demand has started to return, though, led by an increase in manufacturing.

Duke said Thursday that industrial demand grew 7 percent in 2010. Overall demand grew only 2 percent because commercial and residential usage remained weak, according to Lynn Good, Duke's chief financial officer.

Good said that demand from factories typically picks up first



after recessions, followed later by demand from homes and stores.

This year the company expects industrial demand to grow a slower rate of about 2 percent. Commercial and residential demand is also expected to grow, but more modestly.

"We're looking for people to buy more iPads and then plug them in," Rogers said.

The company predicted it would earn \$1.35 to \$1.40 per share in 2011, above analyst estimates of \$1.33 per share.

Duke shares rose 1.9 percent in morning trading to \$18.05. "We were encouraged by their outlook," said Patrick Goff, an analyst at Morningstar. □

Goff said Duke did a good job keeping costs down and running its plants well over the past year. "Their operation and maintenance costs have been basically flat for four years running now," he said.

Lower demand and power prices helped push Duke and Progress together. The companies expect to save \$600 to \$800 million in fuel costs over the first five years after the merger closes.

The combined company's heft will make it easier to pay for and profit from upgrades to existing plants and construction of new, cleaner power plants like nuclear reactors as environmental regulations toughen.

Duke says coming environmental regulations meant to reduce toxic emissions from coal plants could cost as much as \$5 billion over the next several years.

The company plans to set aside \$250 million in 2012 and \$500 million in 2013 to update emissions controls at its older plants.

If state regulators allow Duke to recoup the cost of environmental upgrades through higher customer rates, however, Duke could benefit.

While Duke's regulated businesses improved, its unregulated units in the Midwest struggled. □

In Kabul

Bank crisis linked to foreign errors

KABUL – Afghanistan partly blamed foreign donors for serious problems at the scandal-hit Kabul Bank Thursday after the IMF stated that the lender should be sold or wound down.

The suggestion of foreign responsibility was quickly rejected by a US official who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity and suggested that Kabul was attempting to shift responsibility for its own failure in the affair.

The war-torn country's biggest commercial bank, whose owners include a brother of President Hamid Karzai, came close to collapse last year amid claims that former executives had granted themselves huge loans off the books.

A delegation from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said Tuesday after a visit to Afghanistan that Kabul Bank should be placed into receivership before being sold or closed.



The IMF is considering a financial assistance programme for Afghanistan, one of the world's poorest countries, but has indicated this is conditional on an agreement with the Afghan government on resolving the bank crisis.

Following a meeting between Afghan Finance Minister Omar Zakhilwal, central bank governor Abdul Qadir Fitrat and US Deputy Treasury Secretary Neal Wolin in Kabul, the Afghan finance ministry issued a statement defending its position.

It said Afghan and US

World stocks hit 30-month high



for large U.S. companies have been quite good," said Heinz-Gerd Sonnenschein, equity markets strategist at Deutsche Postbank in Bonn.

Adding to positive sentiment, minutes from the U.S. Federal Reserve's Jan 25-26 policy session showed officials raised their forecasts for economic growth last month, though they still expected slow progress in reducing unemployment.

Robust earnings and merger activity have boosted global equities recently. Data showed three quarters of U.S. companies met or beat market expectations for earnings in the fourth quarter.

The index has risen 4.7 percent so far this year, but its valuations remain modest against a 10-year average. □

Starbucks CEO has "very bold" single-serve plans



In the memo to Starbucks' top brass, Starbucks Chief Executive Howard Schultz said he is increasingly being asked about the company's plans regarding Green Mountain, which has patents protecting some of the technology around its K-Cup coffee pods.

"Green Mountain has done a very fine job introducing single-serve brewer technology to the U.S. market. And as a result it has emerged as an early leader," he said in the memo. □

close to the talks. Starbucks on Thursday declined comment on the issue.

Green Mountain dominates the single-serve market in the United States with its Keurig brewer, but is not a player internationally. Its shares fell 4.8 percent to \$41.97 in afternoon trading.

The company plans to set aside \$250 million in 2012 and \$500 million in 2013 to update emissions controls at its older plants.

If state regulators allow Duke to recoup the cost of environmental upgrades through higher customer rates, however, Duke could benefit.

While Duke's regulated businesses improved, its unregulated units in the Midwest struggled. □

LONDON – World stocks hit a 30-month high on Thursday, driven by strong corporate earnings and cautious optimism on the U.S. economic recovery from the Federal Reserve, while oil prices edged higher on growing political tensions.

Unrest spreading across the oil-rich Middle East and North Africa also helped boost the appeal of safe-haven assets, with Swiss

In Malawi

Madonna deserts girls-only

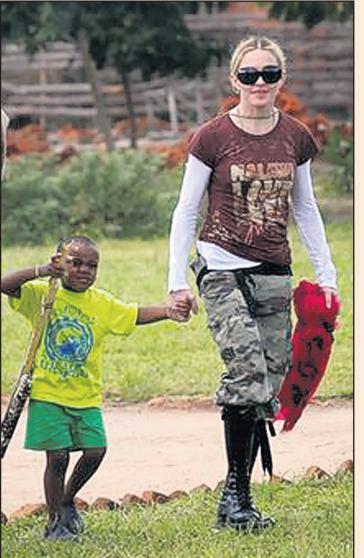
NEW YORK – Logistical problems and other concerns have led Madonna to abandon her plan to build a girls-only school in Malawi, but the new leader of her effort says the superstar instead plans many more schools with educational groups already working toward that goal.

"Basically, what we'd be doing is expanding the ability for a group of nonprofits to provide education to more kids," said Trevor Neilson in an interview with The Associated Press on Thursday.

Neilson, a former executive with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, joins the Raising Malawi project as a partner of the Global Philanthropy Group, a leading international organization that works with organizations and governments around the globe.

He and several other experienced philanthropy experts became part of Raising Malawi's revamped team in November.

"Madonna increasingly



began to have concerns about the effectiveness of the existing strategy and management team, and as a result has made sweeping changes in order to better serve more children in Malawi," he said.

The Kabbalah Centre, once a part of the project, is no longer involved, Neilson noted. Madonna has practiced Kabbalah, a form of Jewish mysticism, for years. The bigger changes involve the scope of Madonna's educational plans in the impoverished African country. □

3.1 Phillip Lim's Gang Appreciation

New York – Drawing from Mexican and Japanese gang culture was one of few references to which Phillip Lim accredited his fall 2011 line that was presented at Pier 61 on the west side's Hudson River in downtown New York on Wednesday, Feb. 16.

"A Loitering Presence," as he entitled the collection, proved that the California native was no stranger to contemporary street wear and its influence in modern fashion. "We tried to build our gang culture," said Lim, referring to his gang of the dandelions in a nod to last season's theme, as he spoke of much research in mixing and transforming different fabrics and textures, a clearly intellectual process he calls "sensitive technology." "We try to disguise and weave, and weave out, and kind of



trick the eye so that people can approach these fabrics," Lim said.

Looks were very approachable and well blended, with smooth and shiny liquid patent paneling against bold curly shearling collars as outerwear. With fold over culottes and low-

Oscar-nominated costumes on view at fashion museum

LOS ANGELES – Helen Mirren's Elizabethan dress from "The Tempest" is covered with gold and silver zippers, all the way up to its ruffled collar.

The hat that made Johnny Depp the Mad Hatter in "Alice in Wonderland" was crafted from imported Italian leather woven with gold threads, and it was sized to fit the fluffy orange wig he wore beneath it.

The costumes from "True Grit" were made new, then aged to look more than 100 years old, while much of the clothing from "The King's Speech" were original pieces from the 1930s.

Film fans and fashionistas can get an up-close look at these Oscar-nominated outfits and nearly 100 other movie costumes at L.A.'s Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising's 19th annual Art of Motion Picture Costume Design exhibition, on view now.

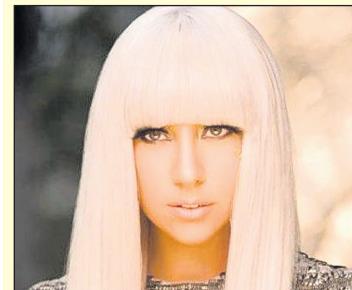
The FIDM Museum & Galleries collects and displays movie costumes



to allow future fashion designers and the public to see the creativity and craftsmanship behind the clothing that makes memorable characters on screen, says curator and fashion historian Kevin Jones. "Costumes perform. They're often the first thing that speak to the audience, before the actor even speaks," he says. "They set the time, the place, the economic status. It's the great power of

costumes for film." Oscar-nominated costume designer Mary Zophres spent months researching the look and style of 1860s Arkansas, where the adventure tale "True Grit" takes place. Once she became fluent in the era's fashions, she ordered multiple outfits made for each character, then had the new clothing aged to appear almost 140 years old. So Jeff Bridges' giant overcoat from the film only looks shabby. □

Lady Gaga: "Born This Way" is the Marijuana to the Cocaine of My New Album"



"Born This Way" According to Lady Gaga, the current hit single "Born This Way" was the softest, most palatable of the songs on her new album, of the same name. Lady Gaga decided to release "Born This Way" as the first single as a gateway to the harder, more intense songs that we will hear on her next album, as marijuana is often considered a gateway drug to harder substances like cocaine. She also discussed her next single "Judas," which Lady Gaga promises will shock audiences.

There is also a special surprise for Lady Gaga fans out there, or those that she affectionately calls 'little monsters.' Right before the release of her new album "Born This Way" in May 2011, Lady Gaga will be releasing three bonus tracks on iTunes, names of which have yet to be released. □

slung front fold trousers, angles and pleating held a stance of their own as Mexican gang garb was represented. Heavily tattooed Japanese gang members, Yakuza, as well as images of geishas supplied the nouveau print seen in shift dresses - delicate and elegantly long strokes that could easily be transferred to a fine china design.

Lim's graphic imagery for his voluminous conical gowns and cylinder skirts, he explained, came from the figure of a girl on her bike. "It's a graphic that is round, a round that is graphic," he said. "We tried to capture the essence, the emotion, the image that trails. The roundness of her silhouette." Many looks featured neckties strewn to the side as if she was still riding against the windy current. □

Banksy graffiti lands in L.A. ahead of Oscars



LOS ANGELES – Street artist Banksy's first film "Exit Through the Gift Shop" is up for an Oscar -- and it seems the subversive Briton may be waging an unorthodox awards campaign on the walls and billboards of Los Angeles. Several examples of graffiti bearing the hallmarks of Banksy's style and humor have turned up in areas of the city in recent days, including a Charlie Brown figure apparently bent on arson, and a cocktail-swigging Mickey Mouse.

The Mickey Mouse graffiti, first spotted on Wednesday, featured a lascivious Mickey grabbing the breast of a model and appears on a billboard opposite the

Directors Guild of America offices near Hollywood's Sunset Strip. The billboard was taken down late on Wednesday. Other pieces noted by bloggers and graffiti artists in recent days include a giant Oscar-like gold figure wearing a hoodie and standing on a red carpet being guarded by "Star Wars" style troopers, and a young boy brandishing a machine gun loaded with colorful crayons. Representatives of the elusive artist, whose identity is unknown in public, could not immediately be reached for comment. Banksy is thought to be based in the southwestern English city of Bristol. He first drew

attention in the early 1990s, and his street art pieces now sell for huge sums. "Exit Through the Gift Shop" billed as "the world's first Street Art disaster movie" premiered at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival and at that time, Banksy hit Park City, Utah, where the festival is held, to paint up the streets. The movie, which looks not just at Banksy's work but how he has inspired numerous others in cities around the world, was nominated last month for a best documentary Oscar. The Oscars, which are the world's top film awards, will be handed out at a ceremony in Los Angeles on Feb 27. □

Irish artist bids to copyright Guevara image

DUBLIN – The Irish artist whose poster of Latin American revolutionary Che Guevara became one of the most reproduced images of the 20th century, said he has decided to copyright the image to block "crass commercial" use. Jim Fitzpatrick produced the classic red and black print of the long-haired Che wearing a soldier's beret with a single star in 1968 and distributed it copyright-free for use by revolutionary groups in Europe. It was quickly adopted by left-wing students, whose t-shirts and posters helped turn the image into a global sign of rebellion.

But the image of the Marxist revolutionary, who helped bring Fidel Castro to power in 1959, has since been co-opted by makers of mugs, baseball caps and even lingerie. The image is emblazoned across Cuban-themed restaurants around the world. "It's not about making money, it's to make sure that it is used properly... that it's not used for crass commercial purposes," said Fitzpatrick, a Celtic artist who has produced album covers for Irish groups Thin Lizzy and Sinead O'Connor. After four decades of allowing the image to be reproduced free of charge, Fitzpatrick said he has



applied for documentation to prove that he is the copyright holder. He intends to travel to Havana later in the year to hand the ownership rights to Guevara's family. "I have no problem seeing it on mass numbers of t-shirts. □



Carlos Leon:

"I didn't ask Madonna for acting tips"

NEW YORK – Carlos Leon may have a close relationship with Madonna, but he has no plans to ask her for acting tips. When asked about the notion, Leon told AP Entertainment: "God no. Career tips, yes, but never acting tips." Leon made the comments while promoting the romantic comedy, "Immigration Tango," about two couples arranging fake marriages to get green cards. He and Madonna have a daughter, Lourdes, together. Leon says the superstar is supportive of everything he does, saying she "comes to the theater when I do theater." While they remain great friends, Leon says it's not easy having a child with such a prominent celebrity. As he puts it: "I can find a cure for AIDS, and every disease possible, and I'll still be associated with Madonna. And that's OK." □

It's a boy for Rod Stewart and Penny Lancaster

NEW YORK – It's a boy for Rod Stewart and his wife, Penny Lancaster. A statement released Thursday said the couple's second son, Aiden, was born Wednesday. The baby weighed 7 pounds, 12 ounces. No other details were released. The statement says: "Mother and baby are healthy and blissfully happy." Their older son, Alastair, was born in 2005. The 66-year-old British rocker's hits include "Forever Young" and "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?" □



What can we do?

Machines beat us at our own game



Machines first out-calculated us in simple math. Then they replaced us on the assembly lines, explored places we couldn't get to, even beat our champions at chess. Now a computer called Watson has bested our best at "Jeopardy!"

A gigantic computer created by IBM specifically to excel at answers-and-questions left two champs of the TV game show in its silicon dust after a three-day tournament, a feat that experts call a technological breakthrough.

Watson earned \$77,147, versus \$24,000 for Ken Jennings and \$21,600 for Brad Rutter. Jennings took it in stride writing "I for one welcome our new computer overlords" alongside his correct Final Jeopardy answer. The next step for the IBM machine and its programmers: taking its mastery of the arcane and applying it to help doctors plow through blizzards of medical information. Watson could also help make Internet searches far more like a conversation than the hit-or-miss things they are now.

Watson's victory leads to the question: What can we measly humans do that amazing machines cannot do or will never do?

The answer, like all of "Jeopardy!," comes in the form of a question: Who not what dreamed up Watson? While computers can calculate and construct, they cannot decide to create. So far, only humans can.

"The way to think about this is: Can Watson decide to create Watson?" said Pradeep Khosla, dean of engineering at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. "We are far from there. Our ability to create is what allows us to discover and create new knowledge and technology." Experts in the field say it is more than the spark of creation that separates man from his mechanical spawn. It is the pride creators can take, the empathy we can all have with the winners and losers, and that magical mix of adrenaline, fear and ability that kicks in when our backs are against the wall and we are in survival mode. What humans have that Watson, IBM's earlier chess champion Deep Blue, and all their electronic predecessors and software successors do not have and will not get is the sort of thing that makes song, romance, smiles, sadness and all that jazz. It's something the experts in computers, robotics and artificial intelligence know very well because they can't figure out how it works in people, much less duplicate it. It's that indescribable essence of humanity. Nevertheless, Watson, which took 25 IBM scientists four years to create, is more than just a trivia whiz, some experts say. Richard Doherty, a computer industry expert and research director at the Envisioneering Group in Seaford, N.Y., said he has been studying artificial intelligence for decades. □

Motorola Atrix a powerful smart phone

SAN FRANCISCO — As smart phones get an increasing array of features, they need faster processors. The Motorola Atrix 4G, billed as "the world's most powerful smart phone," arrives with 2 gigahertz of processing power the kind you're more likely to find on a laptop than a phone. That's notable because there's an optional laptop dock, which makes the phone function as, well, a laptop. The Atrix is available now for pre-order from AT&T Inc. and will begin selling Feb. 22. It costs \$200 with a two-year contract. But if you buy it with the dock, it will cost \$500 after rebate, and you'll have to get a more expensive data plan. On its own, the Atrix is a speedy phone, though not necessarily eye-catching. With the skinny, light dock, the Atrix is a Web surfing and e-mailing champ, which could make it a good travel buddy. For heavy-duty



computing, though, I'd still stick with my full-featured laptop. The Atrix's black slab exterior makes it look like other smart phones, but start poking around and the difference is clear: This is a fast handset. With tasks that don't require a wireless network, such as taking photos or playing games, the Atrix opened menus and applications without hesitation. The camera seemed to start up faster than

those on other smart phones I've used, and I could scroll through applications and contacts on its 4-inch screen with ease.

Considering its processing power, I was miffed to see the Atrix is currently running version 2.2 of Google Inc.'s Android operating system, Froyo, rather than the newer Gingerbread version, whose faster performance and better on-screen keyboard would match well with the Atrix. □

With subscription video service

Redbox may take aim at Netflix

When Redbox finally launches its long-awaited digital streaming service later this year, it will probably look less like the à la carte rentals offered by iTunes, Amazon, and Vudu and more like Netflix's all-you-can-eat buffet. That's the word from Redbox President Mitch Lowe, who (according to the Los Angeles Times' Company Town blog) told analysts Wednesday that the plan calls for a flat-rate monthly subscription that would include video streaming on "multiple devices" as well as a helping of physical disc rentals from Redbox's ubiquitous red kiosks. All that's missing now besides an actual launch date and pricing details, of course is a partner to power Redbox's promised digital video service. Coinstar-owned Redbox confirmed last fall that it was getting into the video-streaming business, with company execs saying at the time that they'd rather buddy up with an established video streaming company

than build a new one from scratch. The usual suspects include the likes of Sonic Solutions (which operates Blockbuster's digital video service), Amazon, and Wal-Mart owner Vudu. But now that Redbox is reportedly leaning toward a flat-rate, subscription-based video offering, the L.A. Times is tipping Amazon as a "likely candidate," especially since rumors surfaced that Amazon is prepping its own subscription video plan. Redbox began testing the waters about an unlimited video-streaming plan less than a year ago, with the company sending out a survey last April to gauge interest in a \$3.95-a-month plan for all-you-can-stream videos plus four free DVD rentals from kiosks. Since Redbox is still charging only a buck a night for DVD rentals (for now, at least), that means anyone who regularly rents at least four Redbox DVDs a month would essentially be getting free video streaming in the bargain. □

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Morales planteará a Unasur controlar aviones EEUU

LA PAZ (AP) - El presidente boliviano Evo Morales anunció el jueves que en la próxima reunión del bloque Unasur planteará que se realice un control "absoluto" a los aviones de Estados Unidos que lleguen a Sudamérica, tras el reciente incidente en Argentina. "En la primera reunión de Unasur vamos a plantear la forma de tener un control absoluto de esta clase de aviones que vienen de

Estados Unidos que traen armas o drogas. Es muy lamentable y tenemos la obligación de defender la soberanía de Sudamérica", dijo Morales en rueda de prensa. La semana pasada autoridades argentinas confiscaron metralletas, municiones, medicinas y equipo para espionaje transportados por un avión de la fuerza aérea estadounidense e ingresados al país sin haber sido

declarados. Washington alega que eran parte del material que iba a utilizarse en un curso para la policía que había sido aprobado por el gobierno argentino.

Morales sostuvo que el hecho "es un atentado a la soberanía de Sudamérica, no solamente a la soberanía de Argentina".

Agregó que Estados Unidos no quiere disculparse con Argentina "por la soberbia del gobierno de ese país" y recordó que "aquí también tuvimos esos problemas, mediante una línea americana llegaron balas y balines" en referencia a la esposa de un jefe militar de la embajada de Estados Unidos en Bolivia que en 2008 trajo a La Paz unas 500 balas para un arma deportiva.

En septiembre de 2008, Morales expulsó al embajador estadounidense y a la agencia antinarcóticos (DEA, según sus siglas en inglés), tras acusarlos de supuestos hechos de espionaje. □



El presidente de Bolivia, Evo Morales, habla durante una conferencia de prensa en el palacio de gobierno en La Paz, Bolivia, el jueves 17 de febrero, 2011. (AP Photo/Juan Karita)

Dominicana se defenderá ante Corte Interamericana

SANTO DOMINGO (AP) - El canciller Carlos Morales Troncoso dijo que República Dominicana se defenderá ante la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos por el caso en que una patrulla militar provocó la muerte a un dominicano y seis inmigrantes haitianos en 2002.

"Tomaremos las medidas de lugar" con la conformación de un equipo de juristas, declaró el jueves.

La Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH) anunció el miércoles en Washington que presentó el caso "masacre de Guayubín" ante la Corte debido a que el gobierno dominicano no cumplió con las recomendaciones emitidas en 2008. La CIDH cuestionó que los militares involucrados en el incidente del 2000 hubiesen sido procesados y absueltos por un tribunal militar, en los que las víctimas civiles

no tienen representación para defenderse. De acuerdo con el expediente, la patrulla militar asignada a un puesto de revisión cerca de la frontera con Haití disparó contra un camión en el que viajaban ocultos unos 28 inmigrantes indocumentados haitianos. Los militares dispararon cuando el chofer del camión, un ciudadano dominicano, se negó a detenerse.

El conductor murió y el vehículo se volcó cerca del poblado de Guayubín, a unos 250 kilómetros al noroeste de la capital. En el incidente también murieron seis de los inmigrantes y otros resultaron heridos. El Centro Cultural Domínico Haitiano, que presentó la demanda ante la CIDH, insiste que los militares dispararon contra algunos haitianos que intentaban escapar de la escena cuando el vehículo ya se había accidentado. □

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